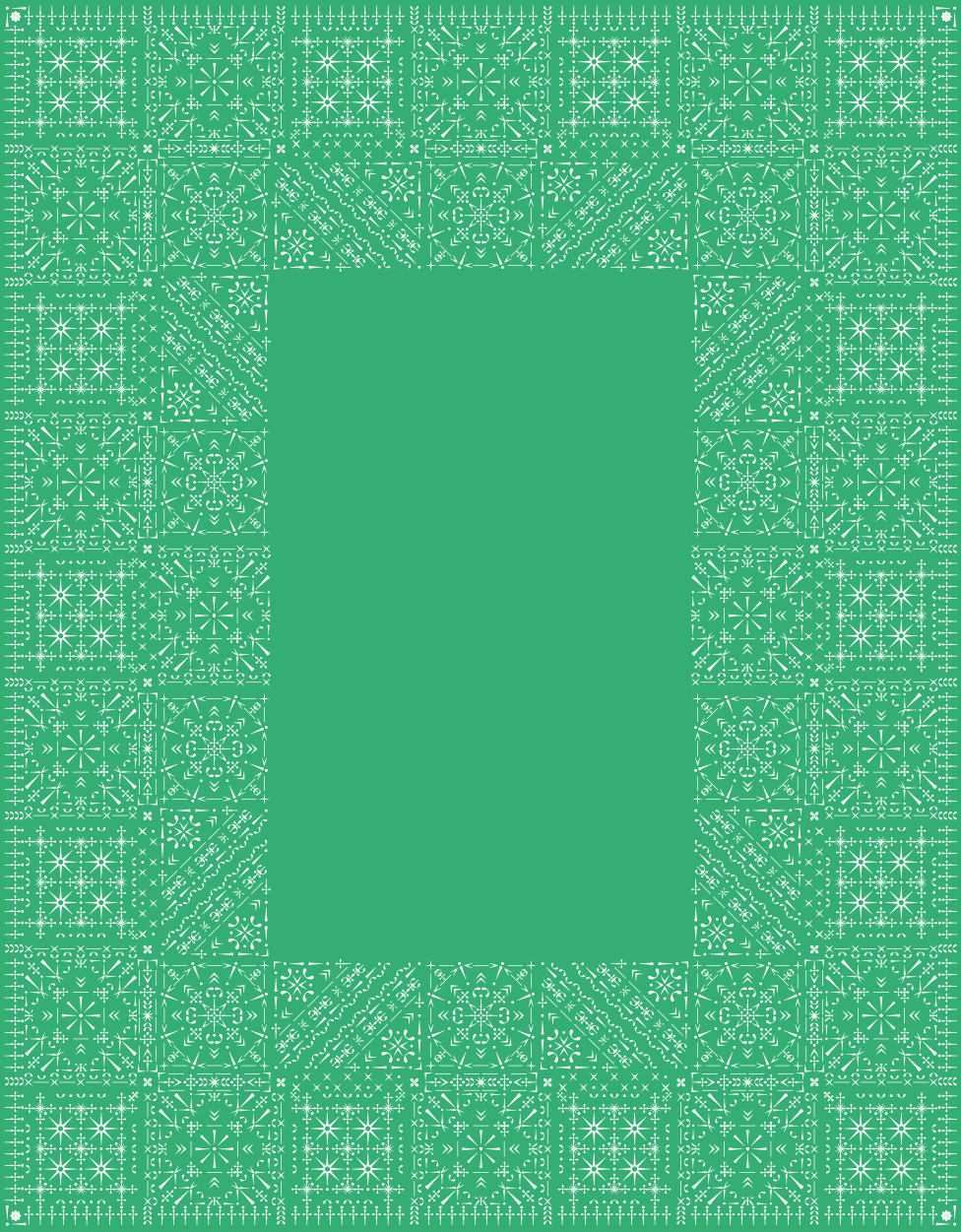
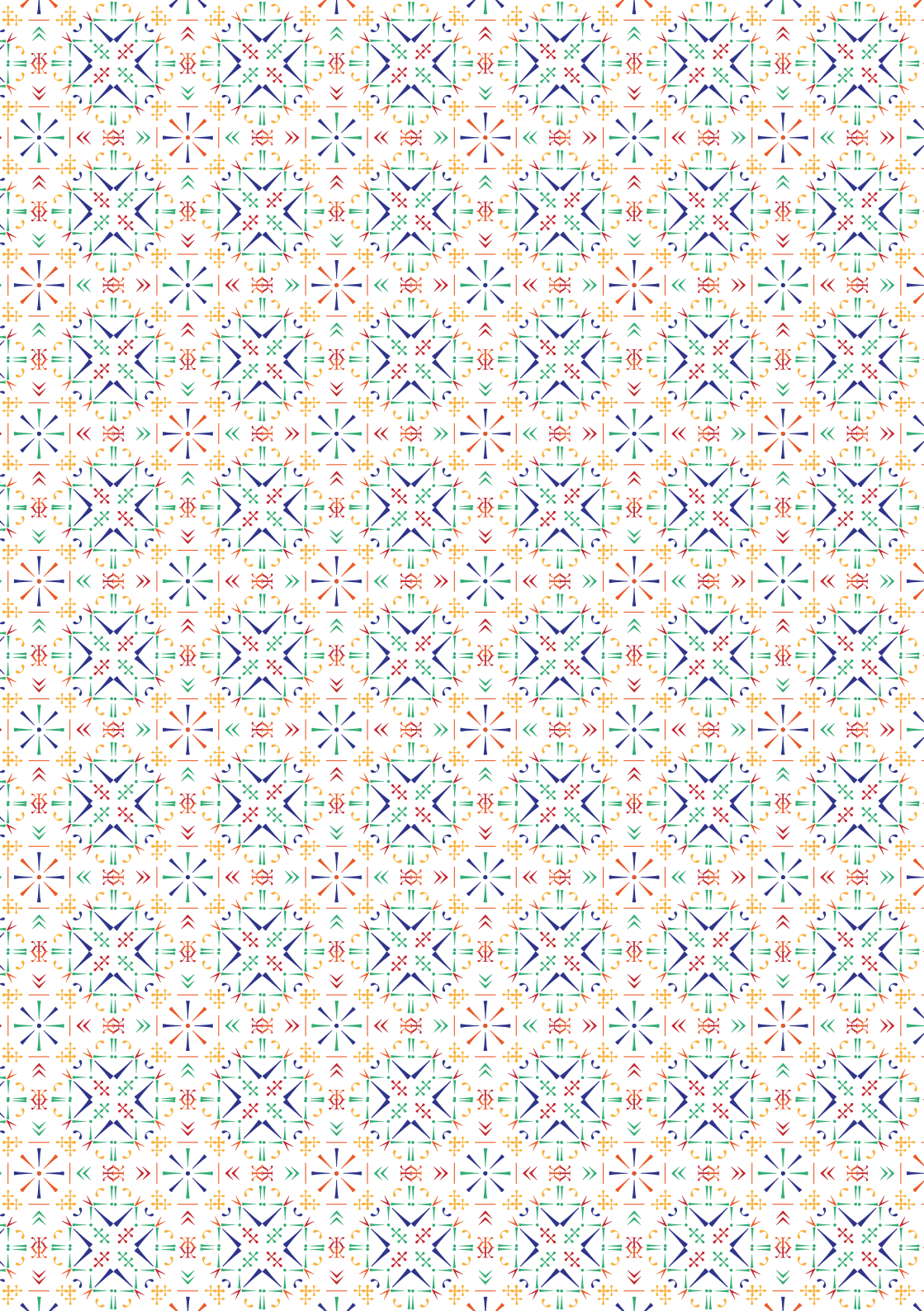
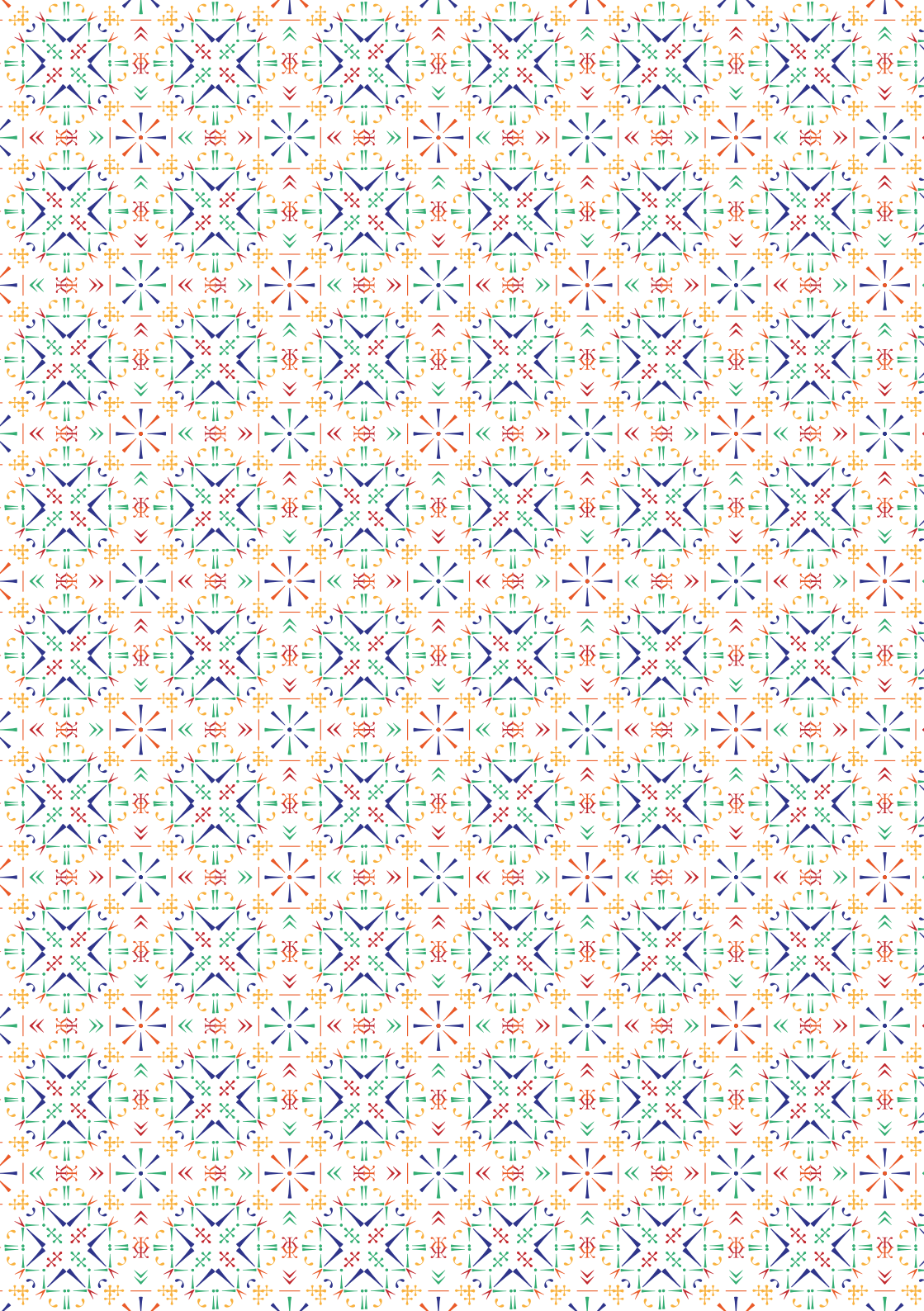


Twenty-One Hymns to Tārā *translated by Dowon Jung*





TWENTY-ONE HYMNS TO TĀRĀ

आर्यतारानमस्कारैकविंशतिस्तोत्र

聖救度佛母二十一種禮讚經

जलाद्रक्षेत्तैलाद्रक्षेद्रक्षेच्छिथिलबन्धनात् ।
मूर्खहस्ते न मां दद्यादिति वदति पुस्तकम् ।।

translation, commentary, and design by
Dowon Jung

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CONTENTS

iii *Preface*
v *Translator's Note*

1 TWENTY-ONE HYMNS TO TĀRĀ
1 Colophon
2 Prelude
4 I. Tārā Swift and Heroic
6 II. Tārā White as the Autumn Moon
8 III. Golden-Coloured Tārā
10 IV. Tārā the Victorious *Uṣnīṣa* of *Tathāgata*
12 V. Tārā Proclaiming the Sound of *Hūṃ*
14 VI. Tārā Victorious Over the Three Worlds
16 VII. Tārā Crushing Adversaries
18 VIII. Tārā Who Crushes All Māra
20 IX. Tārā Granter of Boons
22 IXb. Tārā of the Fragrant Forest of the *Khadira* Trees
24 X. Tārā Dispelling All Sorrow
26 XI. Tārā Summoner of All Beings
28 XII. Tārā Giver of All Prosperity
30 XIII. Tārā the Ripener
32 XIV. Shaking Frowning Tārā
34 XV. Tārā the Great Peaceful One
36 XVI. Tārā the Destroyer of All Attachment
38 XVII. Tārā Accomplisher of All Bliss
40 XVIII. Tārā White & Victorious
42 XIX. Tārā Consumer of All Suffering
44 XX. Tārā Source of All Attainments
46 XXI. Tārā the Perfecter
48 Postlude

56 *Glossary*
59 *Bibliography*

PREFACE

Tārā, like most deities from her region, has had a storied history. Her cult was likely born in the middle of the first millennium on the foothills of the eastern Hindu Kush, where it meets its siblings, the Himalaya and the Karakoram. *Saṃgama* — confluences where rivers meet — are held as sacred sites in most Indic religions, and likewise, here where the three great mountain ranges meet was long a site of religious inspiration and creation (coincidentally, this is also the *saṃgama* site where the Gilgit and Indus rivers meet as well). The passes that dot the mountain ranges offered rare apertures by which Central Asia, East Asia, and South Asia could interact. Merchants and proselytisers alike frequented these routes of cultural exchange, and it was likely these paths which served as the capillaries of medieval Buddhism, as the religion spread from India into China and Tibet. No wonder, then, that the region is home to numerous mountains sacred to a panoply of major religious traditions. One — Mount Kailāsa (གངས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ *gangs rin po che* in Tibetan), sacred to Buddhists, Śaivists, Jains, and Bonpos alike — is mentioned in this text as well.

Likewise, Tārā has worn as many guises as there are mountains in her home region. Tārā probably began as a saviour deity within northern Indian Śaivic traditions — many of which would coalesce into Kaśmiri Śaiva later in the millennium. Her name can be interpreted both as 'light' or 'star' (i.e. one who crosses), or as 'saviour' (i.e. one who allows others to cross), originating, as it does, from the Sanskrit verbal root meaning 'to cross'. She likely influenced and was influenced by Śakti, Mahādevī, and Durgā — all consubstantial female deities associated with the wider Śiva cult, before being syncretised into Buddhist traditions. There, she again likely influenced and was influenced by Guanyin, the (often feminised) East Asian counterpart to Avalokiteśvara.

Within the Buddhist tradition, Tārā encompasses various different attributes. As saviour, she is a healing deity of medicine and fertility; as a mother goddess, she is mother to every being (we are, after all, all destined to become *buddha* eventually); as a tantric deity, she represents a model for practice and invocation. This set of hymns, therefore, demonstrates what has made Tārā so popular across so many divergent cultures. There is, indeed, a Tārā for almost every purpose — Green Tārā for protection and enlightenment; White Tārā for compassion and healing; Red Tārā for subjugation and salvation.

Her heterogeneity is exactly what is so often lost in modern religious practices — in that it reflects a fundamental aspect of the human condition. That is to say, its multiplicity, its variegation, and its transience, as numerous as the mountains of Karakoram, ever shifting and overlapping. Thus, just as the Buddha taught that there is something of the *buddha*-nature within every individual, I hope that even my non-Buddhist readers can find something comforting or appealing in this ageless goddess. Or, at the very least, I pray that they may appreciate the rich and beautiful traditions upon which this text has been transmitted.

To Tārā of the *Khadira* Forest —
to Tārā the Boatwoman —
to Tārā the Great Mother —
namas-tārāyai!

2026 **DOWON JUNG**

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The *Twenty-One Hymns to Tārā* likely originated as a Sanskrit text — arising from the cult of Tārā which drew from a mix of heterogenous Buddhist and Śaivist influences. The cult was likely based in the medieval region of Oḍḍiyāna, now on the borders of Pakistan, India, and Tibet around the Karakoram pass. This region was, as it is now, a crossroads for religious and cultural influences, including early tantric manifestations of Buddhism and Kaśmiri Śaiva.

The Sanskrit text of the *Twenty-One Hymns* is primarily preserved in the Tibetan canon of the *Kangyur* (*bka' 'gyur*; བཀའ་འགྱུར་), transliterated as a *dhāraṇī* (lengthy *mantra* texts for recitation) and elsewhere translated into Tibetan. My translation is based on Martin Willson's combined edition of five *Kangyur* manuscripts. I have further included relevant details from Godefroy de Blonay's Nepalese manuscript edition, alongside Janardan Shastri Pandey and Alex Wayman's editions as well, where differences were significant and relevant.

Nevertheless, though originating within an Indic tradition, the Tārā cult has historically been far more popular within the greater Tibetan region, comprising countless exogenous and indigenous traditions of interpreting and representing Tārā. When it comes to the depiction of Tārā, modern audiences are most familiar with the Sūryagupta tradition, begotten by the eponymous (though historically ambiguous) Kaśmiri *mahāsiddha* monk who is said to have received visions of the twenty-one emanations from Tārā herself. Though the Sūryagupta tradition, belonging as it does to the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism, is less prevalent within Gelug-dominated Tibet now, I have followed Sūryagupta as it decidedly has the most developed system of visual representation, and since my Sanskrit translation largely hews to Sūryagupta. The Tārā images featured

alongside each hymn is drawn from a set of quadrilingual (Sanskrit, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese) blockprints depicting Tārā in Chinese style following Sūryagupta's iconographic system — both these and their descriptions are drawn from Willson's edition.

These original Sanskrit texts from Kaśmir subsequently passed via Tibet into China, where it was translated into heptasyllabic Chinese (likely from Tibetan or some other intermediary language) by the Uyghur poet-translator Anzang. A fascinating figure of the thirteenth-century Mongol Empire (who likely deserves a monograph of his own), Anzang was a polyglot from Beshbalik under Khubilai Khaan's service, who translated Chinese classics of statecraft for the Mongol Khaan, and also translated popular Buddhist texts from throughout the Mongol Empire into Chinese. This edition is preserved in two versions within the *Taishō Tripiṭaka* (TT20.1108A and TT20.1108B), though these texts are noticeably absent in the previous *Tripiṭaka Koreana*, and were likely instead drawn from a later Ming canon. The two versions are largely identical in their main text, though with some differences in paratext and in their depictions of Tārā. TT20.1108B was likely a later reproduction, including blockprints depicting each Tārā following in the Sūryagupta tradition. I have adhered to TT20.1108A for its concision, its key inclusion of a colophon attributing the translation to Anzang, and to avoid incoherence with the descriptions compiled by Willson.

Another much later version also exists — an eighteenth-century quadrilingual (Manchu, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese) manuscript commissioned by the Qianlong Emperor and transcribed by his sixth son. This octosyllabic edition, though historically interesting as a part of Qianlong's campaign of cultural propaganda (the emperor frequently portrayed himself as a *bodhisattva* and Buddhist *cakravartin* king to his Mongol-Tibetan subjects), has not been included separately, though I have referred to it for my translation of Anzang's edition.

There is further the charge that texts important to tantric and esoteric

traditions are not meant to be disseminated to the untrained public. As one who does not belong to a Tibetan tradition, there is not much I may say to defend myself. However, my conscience is mitigated by the fact that the *Twenty-One Hymns* is a foundational text to multiple tantric and non-tantric traditions — and not exclusive to any specific 'whispered' lineages — and now increasingly popular outside Tibet as well. Especially given the text's renewed dissemination, I strongly believe that adding context via translations, linguistic commentaries, and academic study can do no harm, and further serve to enlighten our understanding of Tārā.

Some final notes on the translation: though I have not included transliterations of the Sanskrit for the sake of concision, where I have written transliterated Sanskrit, I have followed the Clay Sanskrit Library's conventions for expressing *saṃdhi* for ease of reading. When it comes to pluralising Sanskrit words, I have kept them identical to their singular forms (i.e. the plural of *buddha* is still *buddha*), in order to avoid the clunky formations created from adding the Anglicised '-s' to the end of words — in most cases pluralisation should be clear from context. Finally, whereas most foreign terms have been italicised, names have not. Thus it is worth mentioning that 'the Buddha' refers to the historical figure of Siddhartha Gautama (or Śākyamuni), *buddha* refers to the generic class of enlightened beings, of which the Buddhist pantheon lists countless.

This translation owes much to preceding efforts by various linguists and teachers. I especially owe a great deal to Martin Willson and his commentary, as well as to Dr Jonathan Katz, who not only taught me Sanskrit, but also tolerated my countless queries over the course of this project. May Tārā's blessings reach them all, as well as all my readers — *śubham*!

TWENTY-ONE HYMNS TO TĀRĀ

आर्यतारानमस्कारैकविंशतिस्तोत्र

Twenty-One Hymns in Homage to Noble Tārā

聖救度佛母二十一種禮讚經

Sūtra of Twenty-One Praises to the Holy Saviour and Buddha-Mother

COLOPHON

ॐ नमो भगवत्यै आर्यश्री एकविंशतितारायै ।

oṃ! Homage to the twenty-one Tārā — holy, noble, and glorious![1]

翰林學士承旨中奉大夫安藏奉詔譯

Translated by Anzang — Imperial Secretary, Academician, and Imperial Attendant of the Hanlin Academy[2]

1. This verse is not included in Willson, de Blonay, and Wayman, but is included in Pandey. Wayman includes the much simpler *namas-tārāyai*.
2. This colophon is only featured in TT20.1108A.

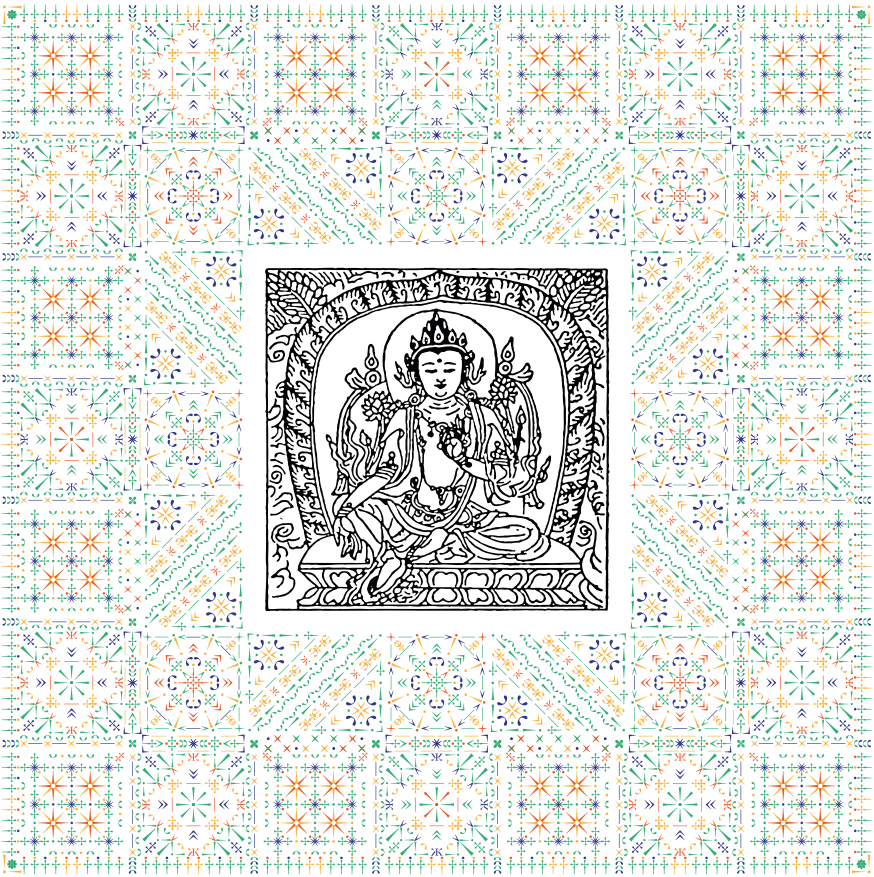
PRELUDE

ॐ नमस्तारे तुरे वीरे तुत्तारे भयनाशने ।
तुरे सर्वार्थदा तारे स्वाहाकारे नमो सतुते ॥

OṂ — homage to Tārā, swift and heroic!
TUTTĀRE — who dispels all fears!
TURE — who grants all gifts!
SVĀHĀ — I give homage to these words![1] [2]

唵敬禮多哩速疾勇
咄多哩者除怖畏
咄哩能授諸勝義
具莎訶字我讚禮

OṂ — homage to Tārā, swift and heroic!
TUTTĀRE — who dispels all fears!
TURE — who reveals the highest truths![3]
SVĀHĀ — I give praise and homage to these words![1]



1. Tārā's root *mantra* — *oṃ tuttāre ture svāhā* — roughly means '*Oṃ* to Swift Tuttārā, *svāhā*!'. *Oṃ* is the primeval sound in Indic religious traditions, usually used to start a *mantra*, and *svāhā* is likewise used to end a *mantra*. Tuttārā is a common epithet of Tārā.
2. The opening verse is a popular *dhāraṇī* which contains within itself the basic Green Tārā *mantra* — *oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svāhā*. Though this verse is not included in some Tibetan versions of the text, this prelude was clearly intended to be part of the full text, as it comprises the first of twenty-eight total verses, consisting of exactly 108 lines (at four lines per verse) — an extremely common and formulaic number held to be auspicious throughout Buddhist practice.
3. The Chinese term **勝義** is a common translation for the Sanskrit word *param'ārtha* in Buddhist texts, literally meaning 'highest truth' and referring to absolute — as opposed to conventional — truth. Note the contrast with the Sanskrit verse, which uses the more mundane *sarv'ārtha* ('all boons').

I. TĀRĀ SWIFT AND HEROIC
प्रवीरतारा

नमस्तारे तुरे वीरे क्षणैर्द्युतिनिभेक्षणे ।
त्रैलोक्यनाथवक्त्राब्जविकसत्केशरोद्भवे ॥ १ ॥

> Homage to Tārā, swift[1] and heroic,
> whose eyes are like momentary lightning,[2]
> begotten from the fluvial petals which shine
> from the lotus-face[3] of the Tri-worldly Lord![4]

敬禮救度速勇母
目如剎那電光照
三世界尊蓮華面
從妙華中現端嚴

> Homage to Tārā the deliverer,[5] swift and heroic mother,[6]
> whose eyes flash like evanescent lightning,
> who from the lotus-face of the Tri-worldly Lord —
> from that mysterious blossom emerges dignified and magnificent!

Tārā Swift and Heroic (*pravīra-tārā*) sits in the midst of space, on a yellow or golden lotus seat. She has a red body radiating fiery light, one face with two eyes, and eight arms. RL1 are raised to proclaim the *dharma*, with the *mudrā* of Great Joy, joining a *vajra* and bell on the crown of her head. RL2 hold a bow and arrow at her heart, shooting someone. R3 holds a wheel, R4 thrusts a wisdom-sword; L3 holds a conch at her heart, or a *vajra*; L4 holds a noose. She is adorned with all the ornaments. Her rite is for turning back the power of others.[7]

1. *Ture* is a frequent invocation associated with Tārā, based on her epithet *tura*, literally meaning 'swift', though it also carries the meaning of willing — i.e. she is readily available at times of need.
2. The Sanskrit phrase *kṣaṇa-dyuti* ('lightning') literally means 'momentary flash'. Here *kṣaṇa* takes the instrumental, though other versions retain the *saṃdhi*. The image is probably intended to suggest intensity, rather than momentariness.
3. The Sanskrit compound *vaktr'âb-ja* literally means 'face-water-born', and can be interpreted in two ways — either as 'lotus-faced' ('water-born' is a common expression for 'lotus'), or as 'born from water from the face' (i.e. 'born from tears'). This translation takes the former interpretation.
4. The *trailokya* in Buddhist cosmology refers to the three realms of rebirth — the realms of desire (*kāma-loka*), form (*rūpa-loka*), and formlessness (*arūpa-loka*). Alternatively, Tibetan commentaries explain that the three realms are those of humans, *nāga*, and the gods.
5. The Chinese title **救度佛母** is a common epithet for Tārā — literally meaning 'Saviour *Buddha*-Mother'
6. Throughout the verses, the Chinese translation consistently invokes Tārā as a 'mother', not seen in the Sanskrit texts — likely reflecting Tārā's probable origins as a syncretistic combination of multiple mother deities.
7. These commentaries describing the iconographies and rites of each Tārā are derived ultimately from the Sūryagupta tradition (a set of five commentaries within the *Tengyur* (*bstan 'gyur*; བསྟན་འགྱུར་) attributed to the eponymous ninth-century Kaśmiri pandit), based on Willson's edition collating the various texts.

II. TĀRĀ WHITE AS THE AUTUMN MOON
चन्द्रकान्तितारा

नमः शतशरचन्द्रसंपूर्णपटलानने ।
तारासहस्रनिकरप्रहसत्किरणोज्ज्वले ॥२॥

Homage to Tārā, who shines abundant
like a hundred autumn moons —
whose smile gleams[1] brighter
than a thousand shining stars![2]

敬禮百秋朗月母
普遍圓滿無垢面
如千星宿俱時聚
殊勝威光超於彼

Homage to Tārā, mother bright as a hundred autumn moons,
whose face is unbesotted and entirely full —
like a thousand constellations gathering together,
her extraordinary brilliance surpasses all else!

Tārā White as the Autumn Moon (*candra-kānti-tārā*) has three faces, representing the three *kāya* [or 'Bodies' of a *buddha* — *saṃbhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya*, and *dharmakāya*],[3] and twelve arms, for the links of Dependent Arising. The centre face is white, the right blue, and the left golden, like gold from the Jambu river[4] (or yellow). Of her arms, RL1 are in contemplation *mudrā*, R2 holds a *khaṭvāṅga* staff, R3 a (blazing) wheel, R4 a jewel or a wisdom-sword, R5 a *vajra*, R6 a garland of flowers; L2 a bottle, to wash away defilements and stains, L3 an *utpala*, L4 a bell, proclaiming the sound of emptiness, L5 a pot of treasure, and L6 a small book, teaching the *dharma* to sentient beings. She is bedecked with all the ornaments of a goddess. Her rite is for calming infectious diseases.

1. The Sanskrit *prahasat* literally means 'smiling', but can also mean 'shining' — i.e. implying the metaphor of shining white teeth.
2. *Tārā*, here meaning 'stars', is also obviously referring to Tārā, both ultimately deriving from the causative of the Sanskrit verbal root √*tṝ* ('to cross'); Tārā is 'one who causes others to cross' (i.e. a saviour), and stars are 'crossers' (i.e. objects which cross the night sky).
3. The *tri-kāya* ('having three bodies') explains the multiple natures of *buddha* in Mahāyāna Buddhism — comprising *saṃbhoga-kāya* (the 'blissful body' which appears in the Pure Land via visionary experiences), *nirmāṇa-kāya* (the 'manifest body' which is the physical emanation of a *buddha*), and *dharma-kāya* (the 'dharma-body'; the true inconceivable and unmanifested aspect of a *buddha*).
4. The *Jambunadī* ('Jambu-river') is a mythological river that flows through Jambudvīpa (a mythological and ancient name for the Indian subcontinent), originating in the fruits of the Jambu tree therein. In Indic religions, the Jambu river is thus often described as golden and honey-like, and symbolises divine nourishment.

III. GOLDEN-COLOURED TĀRĀ
कनकवर्णतारा

नमः कनकनीलाब्जपाणिपद्मविभूषिते ।
दानवीर्यतपःशान्तितितिक्षाध्यानगोचरे ॥३॥

> Homage to Tārā — golden one, indigo water-lily[1] in hand
> and lotus-adorned —
> whose abode is generosity,
> valour, devotion, peace, patience, and meditation![2]

敬禮紫磨金色母
妙蓮華手勝莊嚴
施精勤行柔善靜
忍辱禪定性無境

> Homage to Tārā, mother who shines purple and gold,[1]
> whose glorious hand bears the mysterious lotus bloom —
> generosity, vigour, diligence, peace, goodness, and tranquility
> she boundlessly attained through endurance and meditation!

The Golden-coloured Tārā (*kanaka-varṇa-tārā*), or Tārā of the Perfections, sits in the *vajra* cross-legged position (*vajra-paryaṅka*), very beautiful and shining, on a variegated lotus and sun or moon seat. She has one face and ten arms, for the ten Perfections: R1 holds a rosary at her heart, R2 a wisdom-sword, R3 shoots an arrow (piercing defilements), R4 has a *vajra*, R5 a small staff; L1 a silk scarf, L2 a noose, L3 a lotus, L4 rings a bell, L5 holds up the bow (and arrow) of Compassion. Her rite is for prolonging life.

1. There has been some historical debate as to the colour of Tārā in this verse — i.e. whether 'gold' and 'blue' refer both to Tārā, both to the lotus, or to a golden Tārā holding a blue lotus. According to the Sanskrit, the third option seems most likely, with *nīl'âb-ja* referring to the blue *utpala* lotus native to India and traditionally used medicinally, especially since Tārā is often associated with the *utpala*, which releases its fragrance at night. The Tibetan and Chinese translations, however, take the verse to mean that Tārā is purplish-gold in hue. The Chinese phrase 紫磨金色 is a common formulaic description in this genre of Buddhist literature, particularly in describing Śākyamuni and Maitreya *buddha* as 'golden with a purplish light which emanates when polished'.
2. Though presented here with a slightly different set of six attributes, these refer to the five preliminary stages of perfection (*pāramitā*) required to reach the sixth and final (and arguably most important) perfection of *prajñā* ('wisdom') — the implication being that Tārā is the embodiment of *prajñā* herself, and therefore subsumes the five previous *pāramitā*.

IV. TĀRĀ THE VICTORIOUS *UṢṆĪṢA* OF *TATHĀGATA*
उष्णीषविजयतारा

नमस्तथागतोष्णीषविजयानन्तचारिणि ।
ऽशेषपारमिताप्राप्तजिनपुत्रनिषेविते ॥४॥

Homage to Tārā, Crown[1] of *Tathāgata*,[2]
whose actions are endless victory,
honoured by the sons of the conquering *buddha*[3]
who have accomplished every perfection![4 5]

敬禮如來頂髻母
最勝能滿無邊行
得到彼岸盡無餘
勝勢佛子極所愛

Homage to Tārā, mother and Crown[1] of *Tathāgata*,[2]
who enacts supreme victories, endless and overflowing —
who achieves all-encompassing *pāramitā*,[4]
who is supremely exalted by the sons of the conquering *buddha*![3 5]

Tārā the Victorious *Uṣṇīṣa* of *Tathāgata* (*uṣṇīṣa-vijaya-tārā*) sits firmly in *sattva-paryaṅka* on a yellow lotus and moon seat (indicating uncontaminated virtue and non-attachment). She is golden in colour, shining like a golden mountain, beautiful, virtuous, of the nature of compassion and highest love towards sentient beings, with one face and four arms, with which she has conquered the four *māra*. R1 is in the *mudrā* of granting boons (*vara-da*), i.e. granting supreme *siddhi*, R2 holds a rosary, L1 a bottle or perfume (*gandha*), L2 a staff or a bottle. Her rite is for neutralising lethal poisons.

1. *Uṣṇīṣa* refers specifically to the protruding knot of hair above the Buddha's head, one of the 32 major marks of the Buddha.
2. *Tathāgata* (如來 in Chinese), meaning 'One who has thus gone', is a common epithet for the Buddha.
3. *Jina-putra*, meaning 'Son of the victorious one', is a common epithet for *bodhisattva* (i.e. 'Son of a *buddha*').
4. *Pāramitā* is usually translated as 'perfections', referring to the six attributes required to reach enlightenment.
5. Both the Sanskrit & Chinese texts are somewhat ambiguous as to whether it is Tārā who has 'accomplished every perfection' in this verse, or those *jina-putra* who worship her. I have translated the two editions differently — both to highlight the rival interpretations and in accordance with what felt more accurate, based on the syntaces of the two verses.

V. TĀRĀ PROCLAIMING THE SOUND OF *HŪṂ*
हूंस्वरनादिनीतारा

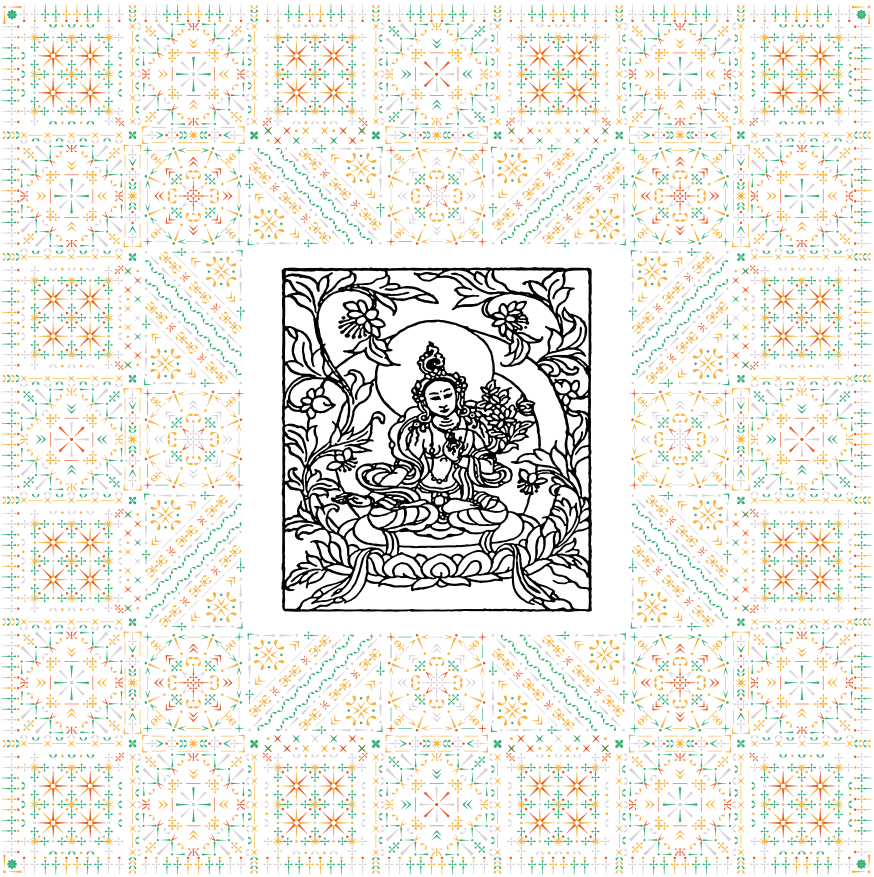
नमस्तुत्तारहूंकारपूरिताशादिगन्तरे ।
सप्तलोकक्रमाक्रान्ति अशेषाकर्षणक्षमे ॥५॥

Homage to Tārā who fills the vault of heaven
with songs of TUTTĀRE! and HŪṂ!,[1]
who tramples the Seven Worlds[2] with her feet,
to whom the whole earth is drawn!

敬禮怛囉吽字母
聲愛方所滿虛空
運足遍履七世界
悉能鉤召攝無餘

Homage to Tārā, mother of the HŪṂ-syllable,[1]
filling the abyss with her benevolent voice,
who treads widely upon the Seven Worlds[2] with her feet,
and summons and draws[3] all beings to her!

Tārā Proclaiming the Sound of *Hūṃ* (*hūṃ-svara-nādinī-tārā*), or the Tārā Summoning the Three Worlds, sits in *vajra-paryaṅka* on an immaculate moon seat. Yellow or the colour of refined gold, She has one face and two arms, R giving Refuge and L holding the branch of a golden lotus. Her rite is subjugating.



1. *Tuttāra* obviously refers back to the Green Tārā *mantra*, whilst *hūṃ* is a common divine sound in tantric literature.
2. The Seven Worlds are a further elaboration of the Three Worlds (*trailokya*) of Buddhist cosmology.
3. The Chinese 鉤 literally means 'hook'.

VI. TĀRĀ VICTORIOUS OVER THE THREE WORLDS
त्रैलोक्यविजयतारा

नमः शक्रानलब्रह्ममरुद्विश्वेश्वरार्चिते ।
भूतवेतालगन्धर्वगणयक्षपुरस्कृते ॥ ६ ॥

Homage to Tārā, worshipped by Śakra, Anala, Brahma, and Marut,[1]
worshipped by all the lords of the universe,[2]
worshipped by spirits and undead *vetāla*;
by hosts of *gandharva* and *yakṣa*![3]

敬禮釋梵火天母
風神自在眾俱集
部多起屍尋香等
諸藥叉眾作稱歎

Homage to Tārā, mother — Śakra, Brahma, Agni,[4]
Vāyu,[5] and all the other lords[6] she convokes;
from spirits to *vetāla* and *gandharva*,
hosts of *yakṣa*[7] all praise her!

Tārā Victorious over the Three Worlds (*trailokya-vijaya-tārā*), or over sins, sits in *sattva-paryaṅka* on a red lotus and sun seat (because pure of delusion), regarding sentient beings, ruby-red and with one face and four arms. R1 holds a *vajra*, R2 a sword, L1 makes the threatening forefinger gesture (*tarjana*), and L2 holds a noose. (She is also known simply as Victorious Tārā (*vijaya-tārā*), and is thus likely to be confused with Tārā number 18.) Her activity is purifying obscurations and negativities.

1. All these are originally Indic Hindu deities later coopted into Buddhist worship — Śakra is the Lord of all deities, derived from Indra; Anala is a common epithet for Agni.
2. *Viśv'ēśvara*, 'Lord of the Universe', could here refer to Śiva, to whom the epithet is commonly applied, or it could be referring to all the previous four deities.
3. *Vetāla* are spirits in Hindu mythology who dwell at charnel grounds and possess dead bodies; *gandharva* are a type of musical deity; *yakṣa* are nature deities.
4. Agni (calqued here as **火天**; 'fire-heaven') is another name for Anala.
5. Like **火天**, **風神** ('wind-god') is a common calque of the Hindu deity Vāyu, known either as the father of the Maruts or invoked interchangeably with them.
6. **自在** (literally 'one who is carefree') is a Chinese title equivalent to the Sanskrit *īśvara* ('lord'), which in an Indic context is usually applied to a supreme deity such as Viṣṇu or Śiva (depending on one's beliefs), but which Buddhist worshippers have also used as a title for various *bodhisattva* and *buddha*. See, for example, a popular Chinese name for Avalokiteśvara — **觀自在**.
7. The Chinese translation here seems to categorise spirits (*bhūta*), *vetāla*, and *gandharva* as subclasses of *yakṣa*.

VII. TĀRĀ CRUSHING ADVERSARIES
वादिप्रमर्दकतारा

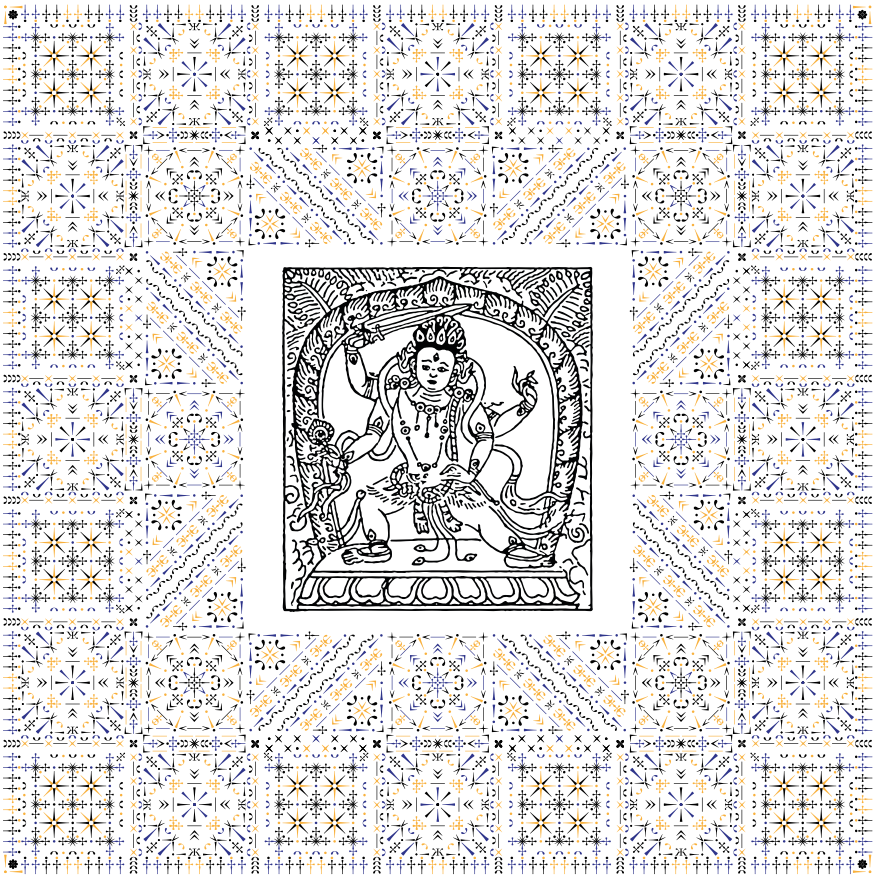
नमस्त्रडिति फट्कारपरयन्त्रप्रमर्दिनि ।
प्रत्यालीढपदन्यासे शिखिज्वालाकुलेक्षणे ॥७॥

> Homage to Tārā, who destroys the devices[1] of enemies
> with sounds of TRAṬ and PHAṬ,[2]
> her left leg outstretched and her foot trampling —
> her eyes[3] ablaze as a wildfire!

敬禮特囉胝發母
於他加行極摧壞
展左踡右作足踏
頂髻熾盛極明耀

> Homage to Tārā, mother of the sounds TRAṬ and PHAṬ,[4]
> who shatters and destroys the schemes of enemies,
> who outstretches her left leg and and tramples with her right foot,
> whose flaming *uṣṇīṣa* dazzles most brightly!

Tārā Crushing Adversaries, or Crushing Disputants (*vādi-pramardaka-tārā*), abides in heroic and graceful *pratyālīḍha* posture — right leg bent and left stretched out — on a yellow or oranges lotus and sun disk. She is black and fierce, with a wrathful face, and wears a yellow or gold dress. She is one-faced and four-armed, the hair of her head bristling upwards, adorned with snakes, with jewelled tiara raised heavenward, and arms and legs adorned with bangles. R1 holds a wheel, R2 a sword, L1 a noose above the *yoni*, L2 is raised and extends a threatening forefinger. Her ritual is for upward transference (of the *yogin*'s consciousness to the Akaniṣṭha Pure Land at the time of death).



1. The Sanskrit *yantra* here means more specifically mystical diagrams or devices used as part of occult practices.
2. Both *traṭ* and *phaṭ* are mystical syllables, commonly exclaimed as part of incantations.
3. de Blonay and Pandey's editions use *ujjvale* ('blazing', but also 'splendid') instead of *ikṣaṇe* ('sight'); the Tibetan and Chinese translations take this reading.
4. The epithet presented here in the Chinese verse — 特囉胝發 — has presented particular difficulty in translating, due to both the meaninglessness of the phrase and the absence of good commentaries on this phrase. However, the Fo Guang Shan Institute's digitised edition of the *Taishō Tripiṭaka*, which contains the Chinese edition of this hymn (T.1108A) glosses this epithet as a transliteration of the Tibetan epithet *traT ces bya dang phaT* (ཏྲཊ་ཅེས་བྱ་དང་ཕཊ་). Given both 囉 and 胝 are both largely meaningless characters commonly used in transliteration of Buddhist terms, I have taken this interpretation to be true. Parsing the Tibetan (with my albeit scant knowledge of the Tibetan language) shows the original Sanskrit to be something akin to *traḍ-nāma-ca-phaṭ* (ཅེས་བྱ་ is a common Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit *nāman*, and དང་ of *ca*), meaning 'so-called *traṭ* and *phaṭ*'.

VIII. TĀRĀ WHO CRUSHES ALL MĀRA AND BESTOWS SUPREME POWERS
मारसूदनवशितोत्तमदतारा

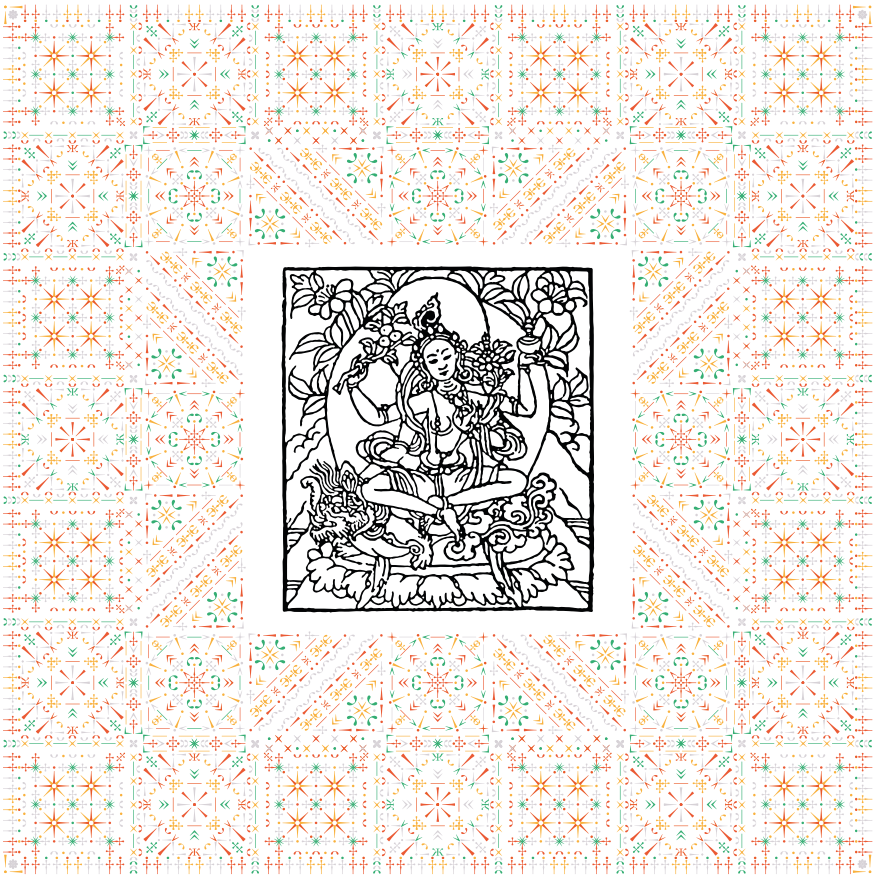
नमस्तुरे महाघोरे मारवीरविनाशिनि ।
भृकुतीकृतवक्त्राब्जसर्वशत्रुनिषूदिनि ॥८॥

Homage to Swift Tārā, great terror
who destroys the hosts of Māra[1] —
with the brows on her lotus-face[2] furrowed
she slays all her enemies!

敬禮都哩大緊母
勇猛能摧怨魔類
於蓮華面作顰眉
摧壞一切冤家眾

Homage to Tārā, swift mother[3] and great terror,
brave conqueror of the hated ilk of Māra,
who, furrowing her lotus-face,
breaks and shatters all her enemy hosts!

The Tārā who Crushes All Māras and Bestows Supreme Powers (*māra-sūdanā vaśit'ôttama-da-tārā*) sits in *ardha-paryaṅka* on a red or white lotus, moon or suns, and crocodile seat (to tame the wicked). She is golden-coloured, with one face and four arms, with wrathful frown and shining complexion. R1 holds a branch of an *aśoka* tree, R2 a jewel, with the *mudrā* of granting boons, L1 a lotus, since she is not enwrapped in defilements and faults, and L2 a pot, bestowing supreme powers on all sentient beings. Her ritual is the Completion Stage.



1. Māra is a Buddhist demon, described as a personification of the forces antagonistic to enlightenment, usually comprising four different metaphorical forms.
2. See note to verse 1.
3. The epithet used here, 都哩, is a transliteration of the Sanskrit *tura* ('swift') — a common epithet for Tārā.

IX. TĀRĀ GRANTER OF BOONS
वरदतारा

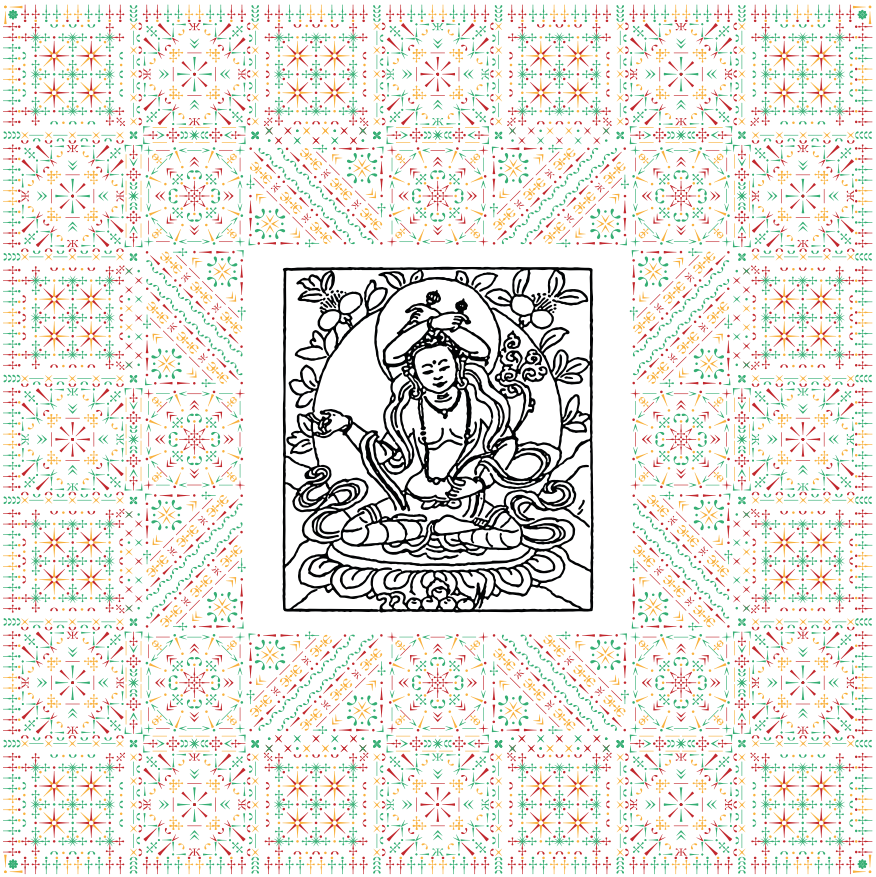
नमस्त्रिरत्नमुद्राङ्कहृद्याङ्गुलिविभूषिते ।
भूषिताशेषदिक्चक्रनिकरस्वकराकुले ॥९॥

> Homage to Tārā, whose heart is adorned
> by the Three-Jewelled[1] *mudrā*[2] of her hand,
> emblazoned with the universal wheels,[3]
> radiant with her own frenzied rays!

敬禮三寶嚴印母
手指當心威嚴相
嚴飾方輪盡無餘
自身熾盛光聚種

> Homage to Tārā, mother of the magnificent Three-Jewelled *mudrā*,
> which, upon her fingers, gloriously marks her heart —
> she is adorned by the universal wheels of the directions,[3]
> gathering multitudes of her own flaming rays of light!

Tārā Granter of Boons (*vara-da-tārā*), or Tārā Wheel-governing and Granting All Desires, abides (with legs wide apart like a wrestler) on a red lotus and moon, ruby-red, with one face and four arms, and adorned with all the ornaments. RL1 make the gesture of Great Joy, joining *vajra* and bell on her crown to show the inseparability of Method and Wisdom. R2 makes a dancing gesture and L2 holds a branch of an *aśoka* tree, with fruit, and rains on all beings a torrent of precious things. (Since she accomplishes all activities, an excellent horse adorns the crown of her head.) Her ritual is establishment, or consecration (*pratiṣṭha*).



1. The *tri-ratna* ('Three Jewels') are the supports by which a Buddhist takes refuge (i.e. follow the Buddha's path) — they comprise the Buddha, *dharma*, and *saṃgha* (the Buddhist community).
2. A *mudrā* is a type of symbolic hand-gesture or pose, used in Buddhist iconography to represent certain aspects or virtues of deities, but later also imbued with ritual power themselves.
3. *Bhūṣit'āśeṣa-dik-cakra* ('all-quarters-wheel-adorned') could carry at least three different meanings — that the universe is adorned with Tārā's radiance; that Tārā is adorned with the universal wheels (possessing the *cakra* emblem on one's feet is one of the 32 marks of an enlightened being); or that all realms are adorned by Tārā's wheels. The ambiguity remains in the Chinese translation, though it seems to lean towards the first interpretation.

IXb. TĀRĀ OF THE FRAGRANT FOREST OF *KHADIRA* TREES[1] खदिरवणीतारा

Homage! O Tārā of *Khadira*[2] Forest!
Goddess born of the syllable TĀṂ![3]
Beauty with hair-curls bedecked with flowers
As sign of the *dharmadhātu*[4] Wisdom!

Homage! With left leg clasping the outstretched
Right, insep'rable Wisdom and Method,
Seated upon a lotus and moon,
With peaceful, one-faced, two-armed form!

Homage! Whose right hand grants boons to beings,
Blue lotus in left; complete with all ornaments,
Graceful, with shining blue-green complexion,
Youthful, wide-eyed and full-breasted!

Mārīcī

Khadiravaṇī-Tārā

Ekajaṭā

1. This additional Tārā is found in a single manuscript from the Sūryagupta tradition — though seemingly not based on any verse of the base Sanskrit text, she is clearly the principal Green Tārā. She often takes the place of the ninth Tārā in the Tibetan tradition. The following translation is taken from Willson's edition.
2. The *khadira* tree (*senegalia catechu*) is a fragrant tree native to India, important in both religious rituals and Ayurvedic medicine.
3. *Tāṃ* is a seed syllable (*bīja*) — syllables contained within *mantra*s that represent certain principles or deities. *Tāṃ* represents Tārā, derived from the first syllable in her name plus the *anusvāra* (*ṃ*).
4. *Dharmadhātu* ('*dharma*-realm') is the purified mind in its natural state, free of delusions, and a precondition for *buddha*-hood.

X. TĀRĀ DISPELLING ALL SORROW
शोकविनोदनतारा

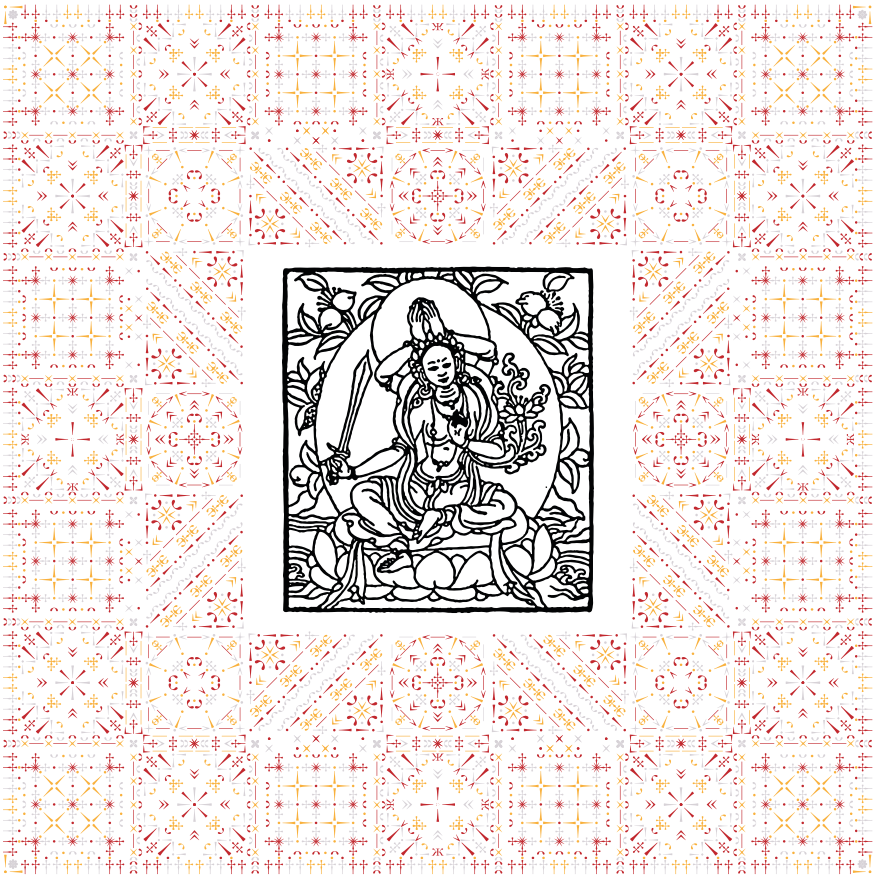
नमः प्रमुदिताटपमुकुटाक्षिप्तमालिनि ।
हसत्प्रहसत्तुतारेमारलोकवशंकरि ॥१०॥

> Homage to Tārā of swelling[1] bliss,
> whose diadem emits garlands,[2]
> who smiles and laughs[3] TUTTĀRE
> as she subjugates the realms of Māra![4]

敬禮威德歡悅母
寶冠珠鬘眾光飾
最極喜笑覩怛哩
鎮世間魔作攝伏

> Homage to Tārā, mother of great virtue and bliss,
> from whose crown come pearled and shining garlands,
> who with utmost joy laughs TUTTĀRE,
> who quells and subdues the evils of this world![4]

Tārā Dispelling All Sorrow (*śoka-vinodana-tārā*) abides gracefully on a red lotus (for non-attachment) and moon, beautiful, red as coral or ruby, with one face and four arms. R1.1 make the gesture of Great Joy — palms joined — on her crown, R2 makes a sword gesture, L2 holds a branch of an *aśoka* tree (the 'sorrowless' tree). Her rite is entering the *maṇḍala*.



1. Both the Tibetan and Chinese versions here insert a sense of 'shining' or 'mirthful', which is inconsistent with *āṭopa* meaning 'swelling' — Willson has theorised therefore that a previous version of the Sanskrit text may have used *āloka* instead.
2. Pandey's edition has the first *pada* as *namaḥ pramudit'âśeṣa-muktā-kṣīra-prasāriṇi*, which would mean roughly, 'Homage to Tārā, who emits all the milks and pearls of blissfulness.' Pearls usually represent wisdom and the Three Jewels, especially as *mukta* can also mean 'liberation' (the etymology being that pearls are 'released' from oysters), whilst milk, as well as obviously being a source of nourishment, was also used in certain Tibetan purification rituals. Interestingly, the Chinese translation, whilst largely following the first version of the Sanskrit, also mentions pearls, perhaps suggesting a syncretistic source: 寶冠珠鬘眾光飾 — meaning 'whose precious crown and pearled garland is adorned with abundant light.' One may further suppose that 珠鬘 ('pearl necklace') may be a translation of *muktā-hāra* ('string of pearls') as opposed to *muktā-kṣīra*.
3. As in verse 2, the duplication here of *hasat-prahasat* carries a double meaning of both 'smiling' and 'shining'.
4. The compound *māra-loka* could be read either as a *tatpuruṣa* (i.e. 'Māra's realm) or as a *dvandva* (i.e. 'Māra and the world'). The Chinese text reads closer to 'the demons of the world' (世間魔), though this reading seems improbable from the Sanskrit.

XI. TĀRĀ SUMMONER OF ALL BEINGS, DISPELLER OF ALL MISFORTUNE
जगद्वशी विपन्निर्बर्हणतारा

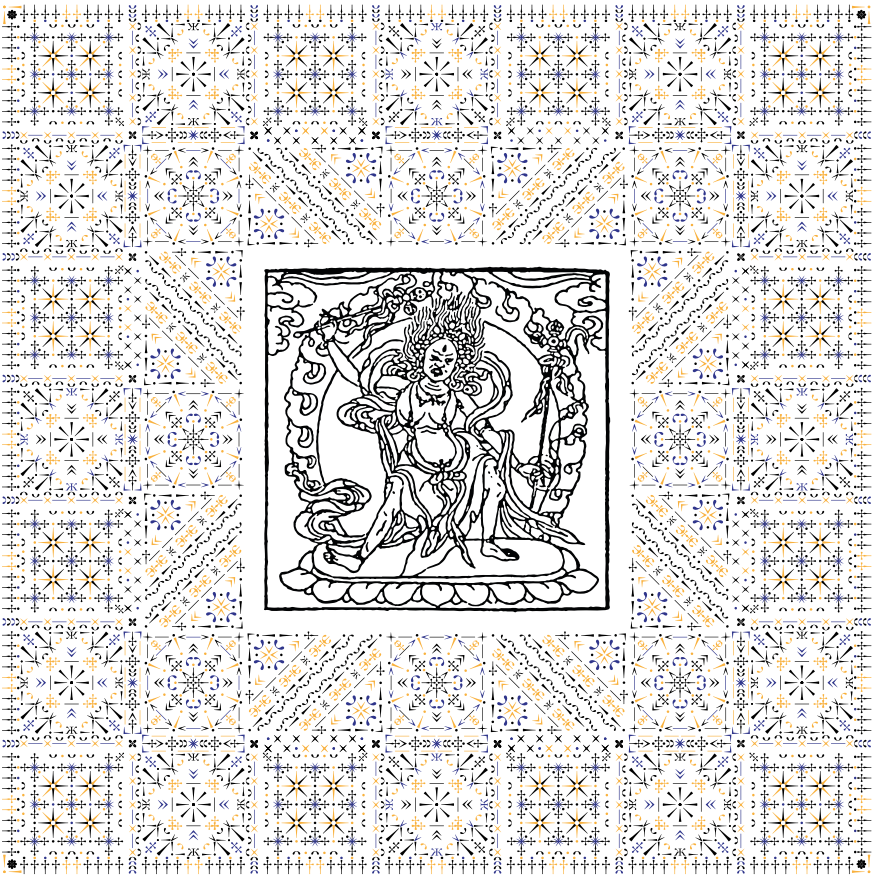
नमः समन्तभूपालपटलाकर्षणक्षमे ।
चलद्भ्रुकुतिहूंकारसर्वापदविमोचनि ॥११॥

Homage to Tārā, summoner
of every earthly prince and their retinues —
who, trembling and frowning,
with the sound of HŪṂ delivers from every evil!

敬禮守護眾地母
亦能鉤召諸神眾
搖顰眉面吽聲字
一切衰敗令度脫

Homage to Tārā, protector mother of numerous lands,
who summons and draws[1] all the masses of gods —
who trembles, and with furrowed brows and the sound of HŪṂ,
leads the fallen[2] into liberation![3]

Tārā Summoner of All Beings, Dispeller of All Misfortune (*jagad-vaśī vipan-nirbarhaṇa-tārā*), abides in graceful posture with right leg extended, on a lotus and sun seat. The colour of darkness, She has one face and two arms, R summoning the eight great planets from the eight cardinal and secondary points with a hook, L holding a magic noose or magic hook. Her rite is for increasing enjoyments.



1. The Chinese **鉤** literally means 'hook'.
2. **衰敗** literally means 'weakened' or 'decayed'.
3. **度脫** is a common translation for the Sanskrit Indic term *mokṣa*, which has a roughly similar meaning to *nirvāṇa*, or 'liberation'.

XII. TĀRĀ GIVER OF ALL PROSPERITY
कल्यानदतारा

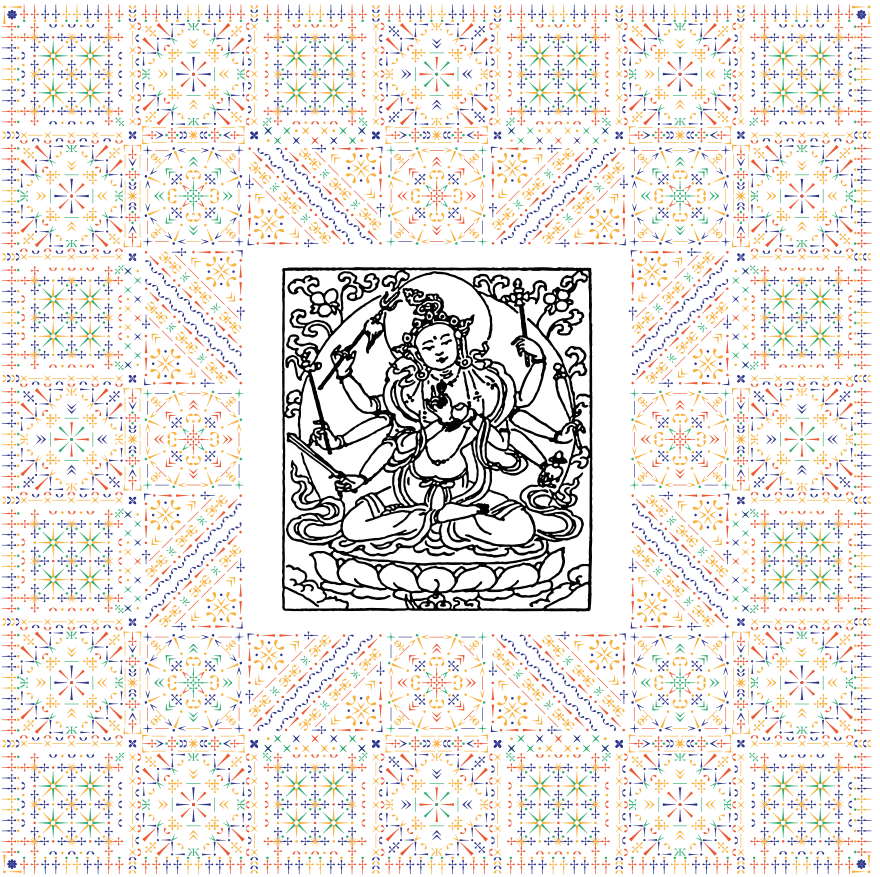
नमः शिखण्डखण्डेन्दुमुकुटाभरणोज्ज्वले
अमिताभजटाभारभासुरे किरणध्रुवे ॥१२॥

> Homage to Tārā, whose crowning plumes
> are adorned with the crescent diadem shining —
> and in her locks lies Amitābha,[1]
> brilliant with light eternal!

敬禮頂冠月相母
冠中現勝妙嚴光
阿彌陀佛髻中現
常放眾妙寶光明

> Homage to Tārā, crescent-crowned mother,
> whose crown is adorned with wondrous light,
> and within her knotted hair appears Amitābha,[1]
> who forever emits splendid rays of jewelled radiance!

Tārā Giver of All Prosperity (*kalyāna-da-tārā*), or Tārā of Auspicious Light (*maṅgal'āloka-tārā*), sits in *vajra-paryaṅka* on a variegated lotus and moon seat. She is golden-coloured, with one face and eight arms, and adorned with a crescent moon. R1 holds a trident, R2 a hook of Compassion, R3 a *vajra*, crushing the host of Māra, R4 a wisdom-sword; L1 a jewel, at her heart (to increase enjoyments), L2 a hook, L3 a staff, L4 a pot of money or a bottle. Her rite is fire-offering (*homa*).



1. Amitābha is the principal *buddha* of Pure Land Buddhism.

XIII. TĀRĀ THE RIPENER[1]
परिपाचकतारा

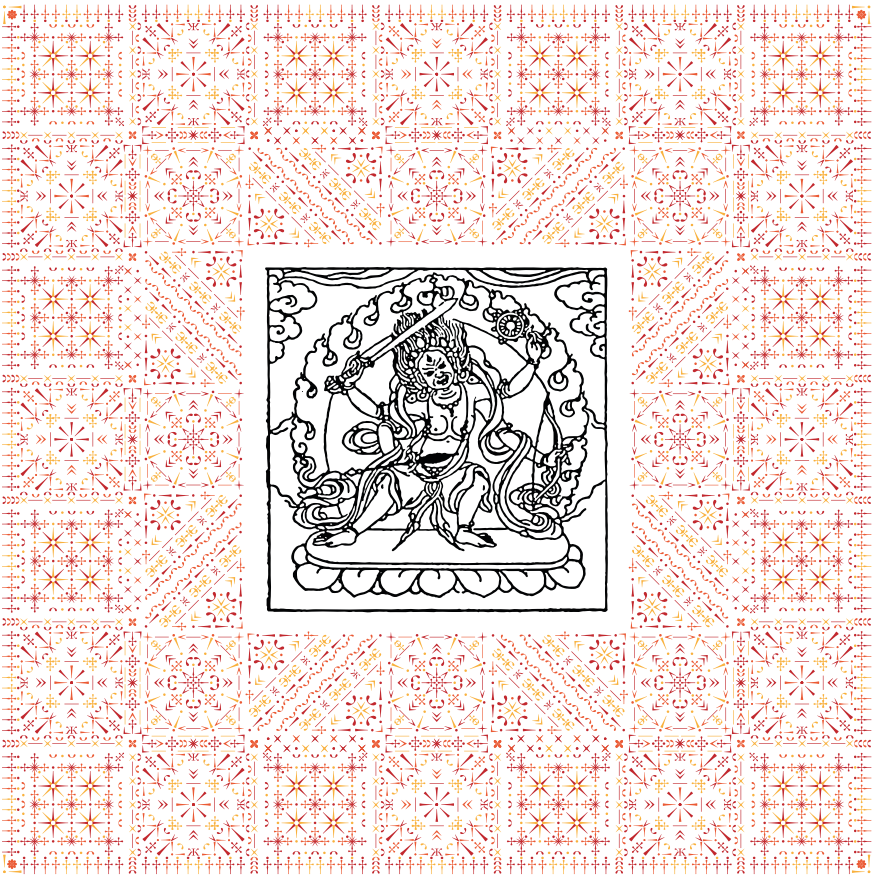
नमः कल्पान्तहुतभुग्ज्वालामालान्तरस्थिते ।
आलीढमुदितावद्धरिपुचक्रविनाशनि ॥१३॥

> Homage to Tārā, who abides within a blazing garland,
> burning as the world-ending flame —
> right leg extended, left leg bent, embracing joy,[2]
> she destroys her enemies' hosts!

敬禮如盡劫火母
安住熾盛頂髻中
普遍喜悅半趺坐
能摧滅壞惡冤輪

> Homage to Tārā, mother like the all-cleansing *kalpa* fire,[3]
> who abides firmly within its flaming crown,
> who sits in *ardha-padm'āsana*,[4] in universal bliss,
> as she shatters the cycles of discord![5]

Tārā the Ripener (*paripācaka-tārā*)[6] is on a red lotus and radiant sun disk, in erect, striding posture, with right leg stretched and left bent, amid a cosmic fire-blaze. From her unbearable body, her ruby-red colour spreads everywhere, burning everything. She has one face and four arms, her frowning lips and eyebrows shaking up and down, very terrible. R1 holds a sword, R2 an arrow, piercing defilements, L1 a wheel, L2 a bow. Her rite is for subduing hindrances.



1. de Blonay's edition swaps the order of verses 13 & 14.
2. The compound *mudit'ābaddha* (literally 'bound to joy') is somewhat ambiguous. Tibetan translations generally interpret the phrase along the lines of 'producing joy', whilst the Chinese translation uses 'spreading joy'. Wayman translates the Sanskrit *ābaddha* to mean posture (i.e. 'delighted in the posture of…'). In this translation I take the liberty of using the active voice, as 'embracing joy'.
3. The Chinese **劫火** is a common translation for the *kalpa* fire, which in Indic Buddhist literature can both symbolise the purifying power of the *bodhicitta* (a mental striving towards enlightenment and compassion) and the eschatological fire of the end of days.
4. **半跌坐** literally says 'half-*padm'āsana*' — i.e. the position in which both legs are bent, with one foot atop the opposite thigh.
5. The Chinese **冤輪** seems to essentially be a calque — that is a word-for-word translation — of the Sanskrit *ripu-cakra*. Rather than interpreting *cakra* to mean 'army', here it takes its more common and basic meaning of 'wheel', thus meaning something closer to 'wheel of hatred'.
6. *Paripācaka*, from the verbal root *pari* + √*pac*, means 'one who ripens / cooks', as well as 'one who burns' — i.e. all transformations caused by fire.

XIV. SHAKING FROWNING TĀRĀ[1]
भृकुटीतारा

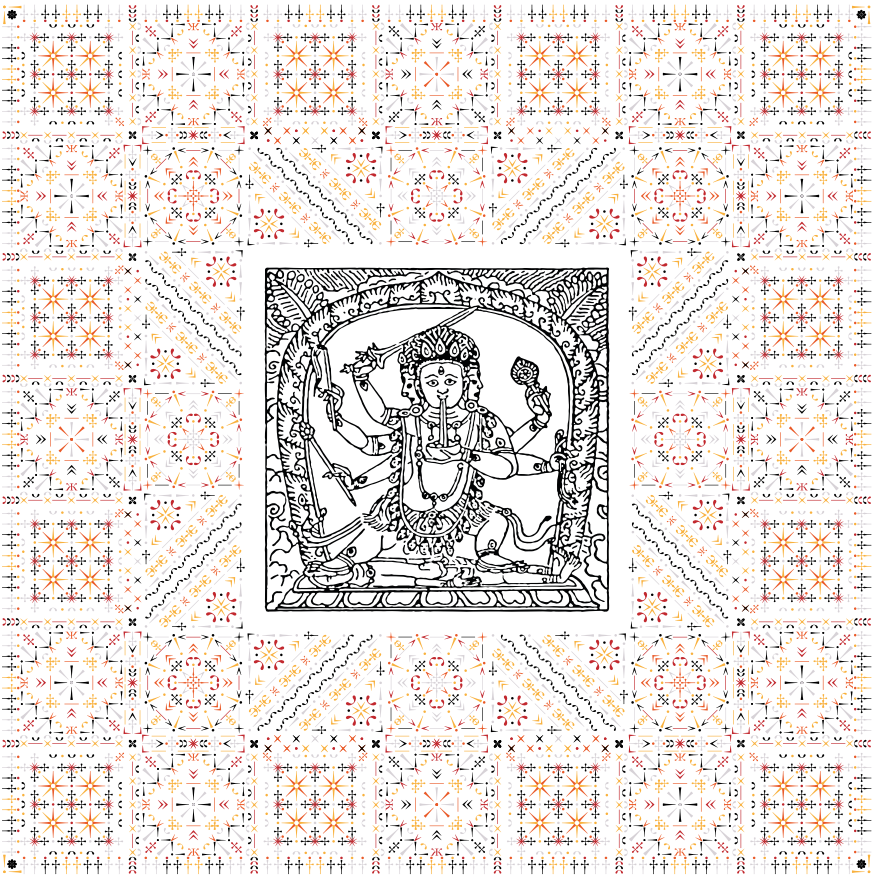
नमः करतलाघातचरणाहतभूतले ।
भृकटीकृतहूंकारसप्तपातालभेदिनि ॥ १४ ॥

Homage to Tārā, who strikes the earth with her palm,[2]
and beats it with her foot,
who frowns, who sings HŪṂ![3]
as she shatters[4] the Seven *Pātāla*![5]

敬禮手按大地母
以足踐蹋作鎮壓
現顰眉面作吽聲
能破七險鎮降伏

Homage to Tārā, mother who presses the earth with her hand,
who with her foot tramples, treads, and tamps,
who appears with furrowed brows and sounds out HŪṂ![3]
who destroys the seven dangers and subdues them into submission!

Tārā the Wrathful Summoner, or Shaking Frowning Tārā (*bhṛkuṭī-tārā*), abides on a red or orange lotus and sun seat, trampling a human corpse as she dances with outstretched right foot. Her body is black and terrible in form, with three wrathful faces, each with three red eyes staring angrily, frowning with contracted brows and lips, the principal face black, the right white and the left red. She wears a necklace of skulls or heads, a skull tiara, and a tiger-skin loincloth, is adorned with (eight) snakes, and is devouring human entrails. Her six arms hold: R1 a sword, R2 a hook, R3 a small staff, L1 a skull brimming with blood, L2 a noose, L3 (Brahmā's) head. Her rite is a protective circle.



1. de Blonay's edition swaps the order of verses 13 & 14.
2. The Sanskrit here is antanaclatic in a way that is difficult to convey in English — *tala* is used twice, first to mean 'palm', and then to mean 'surface' (of the earth).
3. See note to verse 5.
4. de Blonay uses *nāśin*, which translates closer to 'destroying', instead of *bhedin* ('splitting'),
5. A *pātāla* in Indic cosmology is a subterranean realm located above *naraka* (roughly equivalent to hell) inhabited by *asura*, *naga*, and other supernatural beings. They are treated more ambiguously than hell — more so a place of mystery and the occult — and the taming of *pātala* and their inhabitants is a common trope within Vajrayāna Buddhism.

XV. TĀRĀ THE GREAT PEACEFUL ONE
महाशान्तितारा

नमः शिवे शुभे शान्ते शान्तनिर्वाणगोचरे ।
स्वाहाप्रणवसंयुक्ते महापातकनाशनि ॥१५॥

> Homage to Tārā, auspicious,[1] virtuous, peaceful —
> whose field is gentle *nirvāṇa*,[2]
> who is endowed[3] with OṂ[4] and SVĀHĀ —
> homage to the great destroyer of sins![5]

敬禮安隱柔善母
涅槃寂滅最樂境
莎訶命種以相應
善能消滅大災禍

> Homage to Tārā, mother tranquil, gentle, and benevolent,
> whose most joyful domain is *nirvāṇa* and cessation[6] —
> with the corresponding commands of SVĀHĀ and OṂ,[7]
> she, benevolent, annihilates great calamities!

Tārā the Great Peaceful One (*mahā-śānti-tārā*), or Virtuous, Peaceful Tārā, sits in *vajra-paryaṅka* on a white lotus and moon. She is white, the colour of the moon or of white jasmine, with one face and six arms: R1 holding a rosary, at her heart, the sphere of the Conquerors; R2 with the *mudrā* of granting boons, the auspicious *mudrā*; R3 holding a small staff, L1 a lotus, L2 a bottle, and L3, on a broad-petalled *utpala*, a book, teaching the Path to sentient beings. Her ritual is the external washing ritual.

1. The name of the pan-Hindu deity Śiva is derived from *śiva* (translated here as 'auspicious') — it is plausible that the word choice here is deliberate, given Tārā's prominence within Hindu Shaktism, wherein Tārā is presented as one of the ten *mahāvidyā* and a tantric manifestation of Śakti, who is in turn commonly identified as a consort and feminine counterpart of Śiva.
2. A fundamental concept in Buddhism, *nirvāṇa* refers to the final liberation and release from suffering, and is seen as the ultimate goal of Buddhist practice.
3. *Saṃyukta* is a loaded term in Indian religious writing, derived from the verbal root √*yuj* ('join'), from which *yoga* is also derived. The term thus carries the association of spiritual discipline, as well as that of spiritual union.
4. Here the Sanskrit word *praṇava* is used as one of the names of the sacred syllable *oṃ*. *Praṇava* literally means 'fore-sound' — i.e. *oṃ* the primeval sound.
5. *Pātaka* is roughly analogous to 'sin', more literally translated as 'downfall' — i.e. 'that which causes to fall'.
6. The Chinese **寂滅** (literally 'tranquil extinction') is a common translation of the Sanskrit *vyupaśama*, which in this case is largely synonymous with *nirvāṇa*.
7. Here the Chinese version does not use the usual transliteration of **唵**. Instead it uses **種** ('seed'), presumably as a translation of the Sanskrit *bīja* — *oṃ* is the primordial *bīja* syllable.

XVI. TĀRĀ DESTROYER OF ALL ATTACHMENT
रागनिषूदनतारा

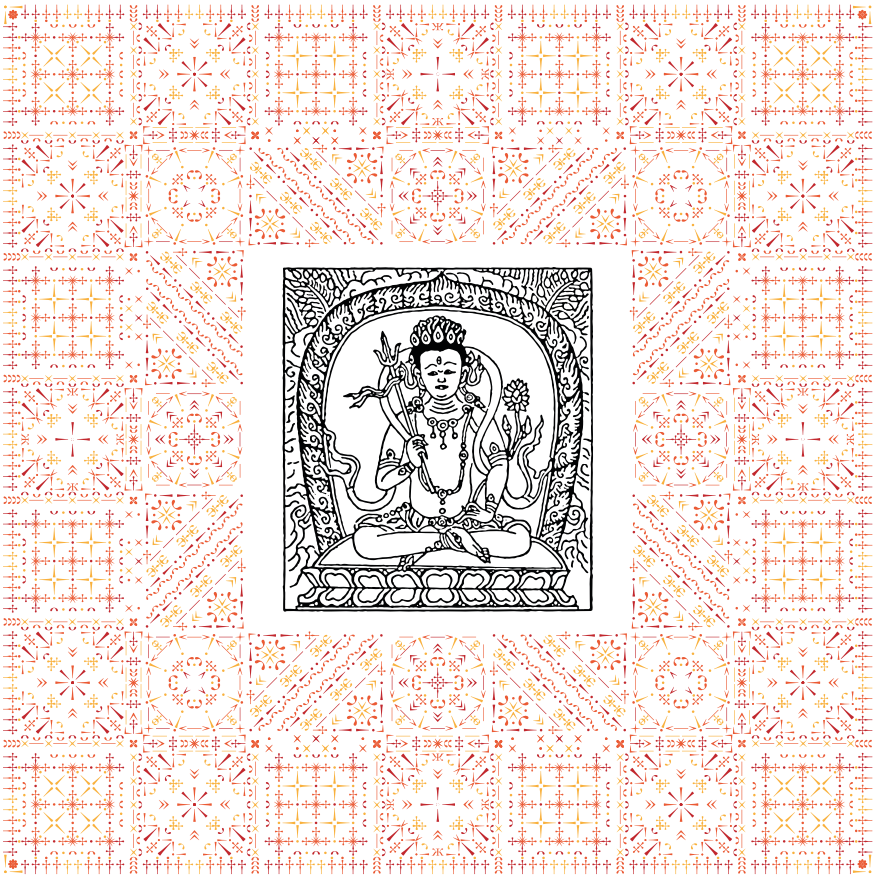
नमः प्रमुदिताबन्धरिपुगात्रप्रभेदिनि ।
दशाक्षरपदन्यासे विद्याहूंकारदीपिते ॥ १६ ॥

> Homage to Tārā who embraces joy,[1]
> who cleaves her enemies' bodies —
> illuminated by the HŪṂ-*mantra*,
> deliverer[2] of that decasyllabic verse![3]

敬禮普遍極喜母
諸怨支體令脫離
十字呪句妙嚴布
明呪吽聲常朗耀

> Homage to Tārā, mother of utmost and universal bliss,
> who orders asunder all the limbs and bodies of her enemies,
> who declares with majesty the ten-lettered incantation,[3]
> whose sound of HŪṂ shines unfailingly bright!

Tārā Destroyer of All Attachment (*rāga-niṣūdana-tārā*), or Destroyer of Enemies, sits in *sattva-paryaṅka* on a red or orange lotus and sun disk. She is coral-red, beautiful, and bright, with one three-eyed face and two arms. R holds a trident at her heart, piercing an enemy's body, L holds a tree with fruit at her heart, with a threatening forefinger gesture. Her function is mind-increasing.



1. See note to verse 13.
2. Wayman's edition reads *daś'âkṣara-pada-nyāsa*, as opposed to Willson, de Blonay, and Pandey's *daś'âkṣara-pada-nyāse*. The use of the feminine vocative ending of *nyāse* changes the meaning of the second *pada* somewhat compared to the uninflected compound *nyāsa* in Wayman. With the vocative *nyāse*, the phrase refers directly back to Tārā, as she who applies or brings forth the *mantra*, whereas in the uninflected form *nyāsa*, we can interpret the phrase as referring to the *mantra* itself — i.e. the *hūṃ-mantra* which is set down in ten syllables. The Chinese translation seems to lean towards the former *nyāse* interpretation.
3. The decasyllabic verse refers to the primary Tārā *mantra* of *oṃ tāre tuttāre ture svāhā*. The Sanskrit *dīpite* ('illuminated') is also itself associated with the word *dīpinī*, meaning '*mantra*' or 'mystical formula' (i.e. 'that which illuminates'), giving rise to the alternative translation of the verse as 'she whose *mantra* is the *hūṃ-mantra*'.

XVII. TĀRĀ ACCOMPLISHER OF ALL BLISS
सुखसाधनतारा

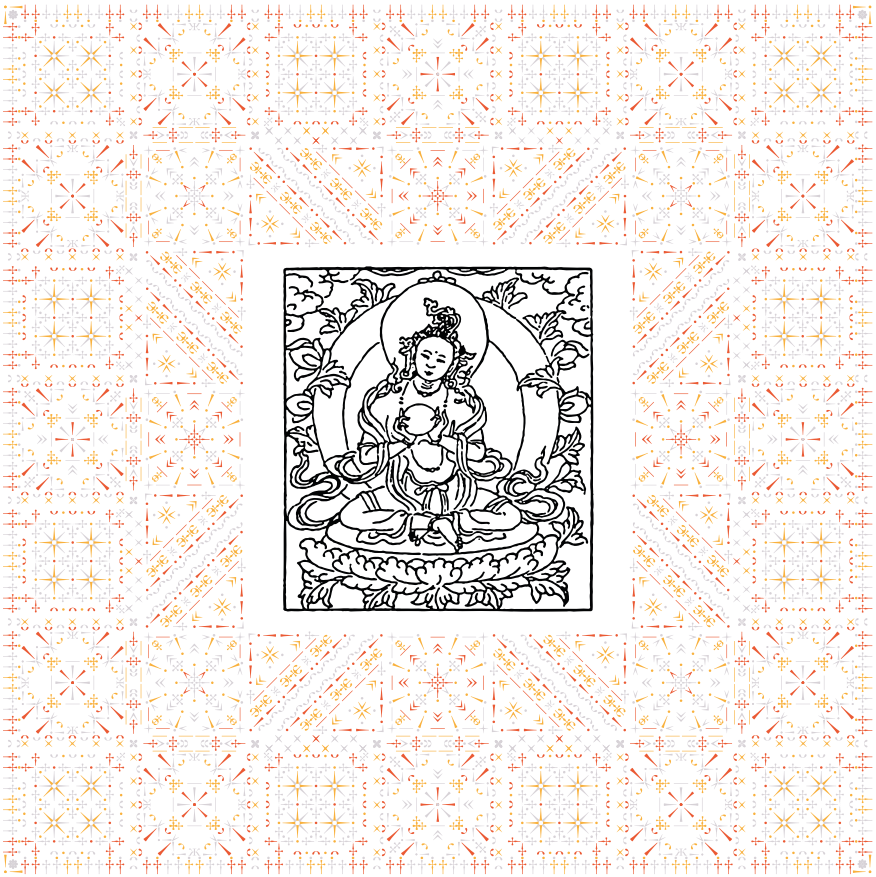
नमस्तुरे पदाघातहूंकाराकारबीजिते ।
मेरुमन्दरकैलासभुवनत्रयचालिनि ॥ १७ ॥

> Homage to Swift Tārā who stamps her feet —
> her form sowed from the syllable HŪṂ[1] —
> who moves Meru, Mandara, Kailāsa,[2]
> and the Three Worlds![3]

敬禮都哩巴帝母
足躡相勢吽字種
彌嚕曼陀結辣薩
於此三處能搖動

> Homage to Tārā, swift empress-mother who stomps her feet,[4]
> whose treading appears as the *bīja*-syllable of HŪṂ[1] —
> Meru, Mandara, Kailāsa[2] —
> these three abodes she quakes and moves![5]

Tārā Accomplisher of All Bliss (*sukha-sādhana-tārā*), or Endowed with Bliss, sits in *sattva-paryaṅka* on a shining white lotus, (a moon disk) and a sun seat. She is orange in colour, with one face and two arms, beautiful, and adorned with many jewels. Both hands hold a moon disk at her heart. Her rite is for binding thieves.



1. See note to verse 9b on seed syllables.
2. Mount Meru is a sacred five-peaked mountain common to various Indic cosmologies, usually described as the centre of the universe. Mount Mandara is another mythical mountain, noteworthy in Hindu Puranic cosmology as the mountain used by the gods as a churning rod to churn the ocean of milk during the *samudra-manthana*. Mount Kailāsa is a Himalayan mountain in Tibet (called གངས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ *gangs rin po che* in Tibetan), described as the abode of Śiva and a site of pilgrimage for Hindus, Buddhists, Jains , and Bonpos alike. Kailāsa is itself often identified with Meru.
3. Here, *bhuvana-traya* ('Three Worlds') generally refers to the three realms of heaven, the atmosphere, and the earth — usually distinct from *trailokya* (the three realms of rebirth).
4. The epithet here — 都哩巴帝 — is likely another rough transliteration of an equivalent Tibetan epithet. The Tibetan epithet is *tu re'i zhabs ni brdabs pas* (ཏུ་རེའི་ཞབས་ནི་བརྡབས་པས), meaning '*ture* (transliteration of the Sanskrit meaning 'O swift one') who boldly stomps her feet'.
5. Whereas the Sanskrit clearly refers to the three mountains and the three worlds separately, here the Chinese 三處 (literally 'three locations') seems to refer back to Meru, Mandara, and Kailāsa.

XVIII. TĀRĀ WHITE & VICTORIOUS
सितविजयतारा

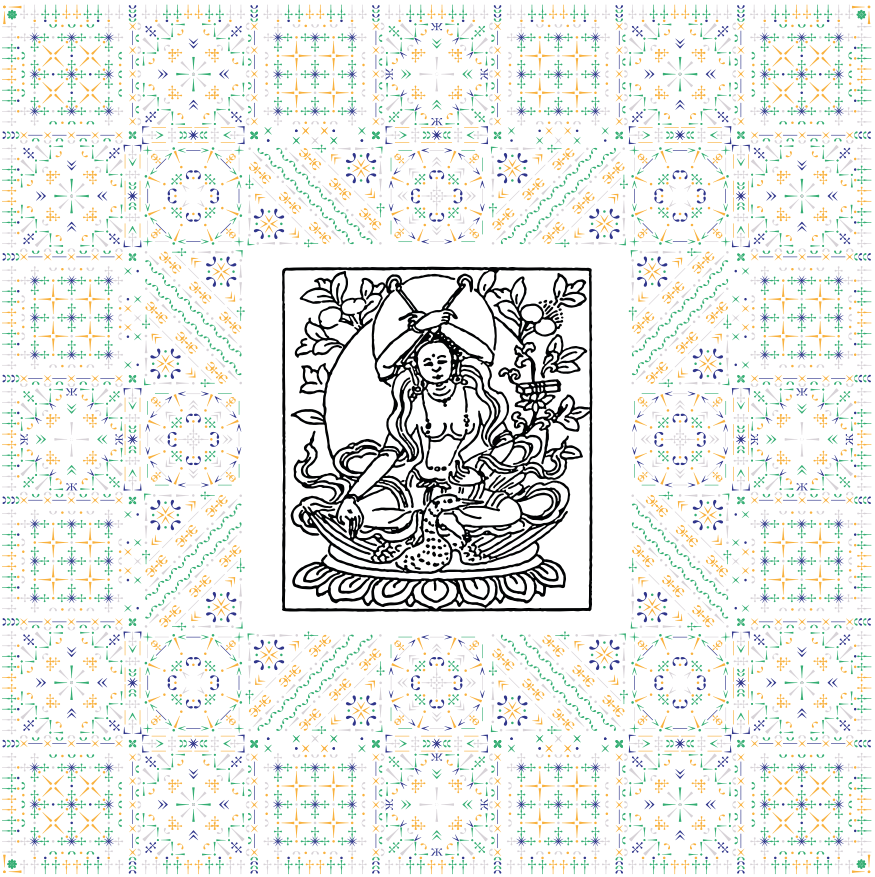
नमः सुरसराकारहरिणाङ्ककरस्थिते ।
तारद्विरुक्तफड्कारैरशषविषनाशिनि ॥ १८॥

> Homage to Tārā of the divine lake,[1] [2]
> who upon the deer-marked lunar[3] hand abides,
> who by uttering twice TĀRĀ and sounding PHAṬ,[4] [5]
> completely dispells all poisons!

敬禮薩囉天海母
手中執住神獸像
誦二怛囉作發聲
能滅諸毒盡無餘

> Homage to Tārā of the celestial sea[6] —
> grasped within her palm, lives the image of the celestial beast —
> she recites TĀRĀ twice and makes the sound of PHAṬ,
> as she dispells completely all poisons!

Tārā the Victorious (*[sita-]vijaya-tara*; *sita* ('white') to distinguish her from number 6) sits in *sattva-paryaṅka* upon a white lotus, a moon disk and a goose with fine wings. She is white, one-faced and four-armed. R1.1 hold hooks on the crown of her head, with the *mudrā* of Joy. R2 has the *mudrā* of granting boons, L2 holds a book, on a blue lotus. Her rite is for curing the *nāga*-disease (leprosy).[7]



1. There is some ambiguity in this Sanskrit compound. One could read *sura-sar'ākāra* as describing Tārā, as Willson has done, or as describing the moon, as the Tibetan translations tend to do. Another alternative reading is from Wayman, who sees it as Tārā herself sitting on a hand, the form of which is deer-marked and like a divine lake — this is the reading taken here.
2. This divine lake is identified in Tibetan sources with Lake Mānasa (called མ་པམ་གཡུ་མཚོ་ *ma pham g.yu mtsho* in Tibetan), located in Tibet near the aforementioned Mt Kailāsa (see note to verse 17) — likewise a site of Hindus, Buddhists, Jains , and Bonpos, and famously round in shape.
3. *Hariṇ'āṅka* ('deer-marked') is a common Sanskrit epithet for the moon, whose patterns many Indic cultures saw as deer-shaped or, depending on interpretation, hare-shaped — see also East Asian myths surrounding lunar hares.
4. There is some divergence between different versions of this verse. *Tārā* and *phaṭ* are sometimes replaced with *hara* ('destroying') and *sphuṭ* ('a verbal root meaning 'dispel') respectively — both appropriate given the verse's focus on Tārā's abilities to heal afflictions. *Hara* was also a prominent early epithet for Śiva.
5. de Blonay and Pandey's versions alternatively read *phaṭ-kāra*, as opposed to Wayman's *phaṭ-kārair*. The alternative does not significantly change the meaning of the verse, though Wayman's version tends to emphasise the instrumentality of these incantations.
6. The Chinese 薩囉 here is likely a transliteration of the Sanskrit *sara* ('lake').
7. Leprosy is called so due to a belief that diseases such as leprosy were caused by polluting streams inhabited by *nāga*, a type of serpentine spirit in Indic mythology particularly associated with bodies of water.

XIX. TĀRĀ CONSUMER OF ALL SUFFERING
दुःखदहनतारा

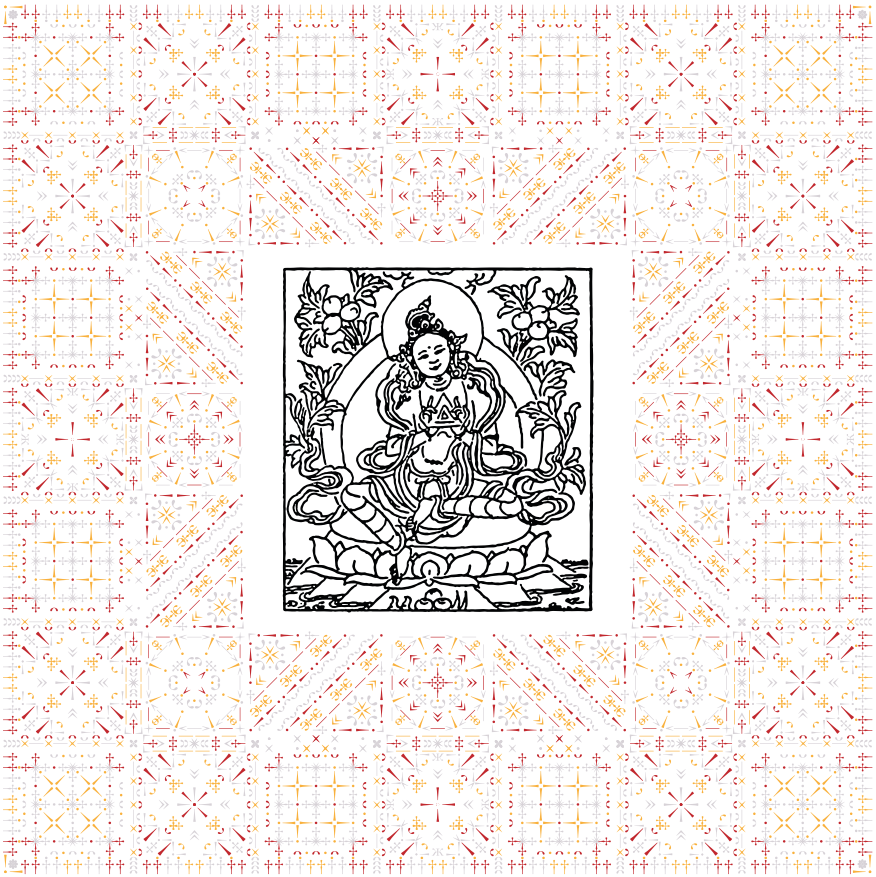
नमः सुरगणाध्यक्षसुरकिंनरसेविते ।
आबद्धमुदिताभोगकलिदुःस्वप्ननाशिनि ॥ १९ ॥

Homage to Tārā, served by the king of the gods,
as well as all the gods and *kiṃnara*[1] —
bound by joy and satiation,
she dispells all disputes and nightmares![2]

敬禮諸天集會母
天緊那羅所依愛
威德歡悅若堅鎧
滅除鬪諍及惡夢

Homage to Tārā, mother who summons all the *deva*,[3]
whom the celestial *kiṃnara* worship and follow —
armoured with virtue and bliss,
she dispells all disputes and nightmares!

Tārā Consumer of All Suffering (*duḥkha-dahana-tārā*) sits in *sattva-paryaṅka* with right leg slightly advanced, on a white lotus and sun or moon disk. Her graceful body, one-faced and two-armed, is white like jasmine or a conch, and adorned with a garland of variegated, white and red lightrays, eliminating all the defilements of sentient beings. Both hands hold at her heart a brazier, consuming sufferings. Her rite is for freeing from prison.



1. *Kiṃnara* (meaning literally 'what sort of man?'; usually rendered into English as *kinnara*) are a type of mythical creature in Indic mythologies, described as part human and part man, especially associated with love and music.
2. Similarly to *mudit'ābaddha* in verse 13, the second *pada* here presents considerable ambiguity in translation. *Ābaddha-mudita* could be taken as 'joy-producing' (as in Willson) or 'joyful posture or yoga' (as in Wayman). The Chinese and Tibetan translations suggest 'enclosed or armoured in joy' (歡悅若堅鎧). Likewise, the two halves of the *pada* could be read independently, as Willson does, as 'producer of joy … and dispeller of disputes' (though this would be clearer with a double vocative, as opposed to the single compound presented here), whilst Wayman translates it as 'destroys quarrel and bad dreams with the delightful winding of the circular band.' I have taken a middle approach that suggests both readings.
3. The Chinese 諸天 is a common translation for *deva*.

XX. TĀRĀ SOURCE OF ALL ATTAINMENTS
सिद्धिसंभवतारा

नमश्चन्द्रार्कसंपूर्णनयनद्युतिभासुरे ।
हरद्विरुक्ततुत्तारे विषमज्वरनाशिनि ॥२०॥

Homage to Tārā, whose eyes are bright
with the radiance of the full sun and moon,[1] [2]
who twice utters HARA and TUTTĀRE[3]
to ward off all feverous afflictions![4]

敬禮日月廣圓毋
目覩猶勝普光照
誦二喝囉咄怛哩
善除惡毒瘟熱病

Homage to Tārā, mother like the vast disks of the sun & moon,
whose eyes behold, ever radiant with light all-pervading and
triumphant —
uttering twice HARA and TUTTĀRE,[3]
her virtue eliminates all evils, poisons, plagues, and fevers!

Tārā Source of All Attainments (*siddhi-saṃbhava-tārā*) sits in *sattva-paryaṅka* on a red or white lotus and moon disk. She is orange or coppery golden in colour, (indicating the *karma-kula*,[5]) with one face and two arms, both holding at her heart a golden pot, subduing disease and granting all attainments. Her rite is for making invisible.

1. In the Sanskrit compound *candr'ârka-saṃpūrṇa*, *saṃpūrṇa* ('full') can apply to both *candra* ('moon') and *arka* ('sun'). By common sense, it may be that it simply referred to the full moon, though here I have taken the word to apply to both — conveying a sense of entirety and abundance.
2. Tibetan commentaries elaborate that this description, rather than suggesting that one of Tārā's eyes is like the moon, and the other like the sun, actually suggests that in her fierce form, both of Tārā's eyes are like the full sun, and in her peaceful form, they are like the gentle moon.
3. Likewise, Tibetan commentaries explain that *hara* is her fierce *mantra*, whilst *tuttāre* is her peaceful *mantra*.
4. *Viṣama-jvara* literally refers to a chronic fever, commonly diagnosed in Ayurvedic medicine as the symptom of some kind of bodily excess, venomous bite, or other imbalance. Here, however, in the Buddhist context, chronic fever is a metaphor for the arduous existence within *saṃsāra* itself.
5. *Karma-kula* ('the Family of *Karma*'; ལས་ཀྱི་རིགས་རྩོགས *las kyi rigs tshogs* in Tibetan) refers to the family of the *buddha* Amoghasiddhi, who is one of the Five *Tathāgata* — a set of cardinal, primordial *buddha*. The Five *Tathāgata* are popular subjects of meditation and devotional art in Vajrayāna Buddhism and other forms of esoteric Buddhism across East Asia, and come in co-equal male-female pairs, with Amoghasiddhi in particular forming a family with Tārā.

XXI. TĀRĀ THE PERFECTER
परिपूरणतारा

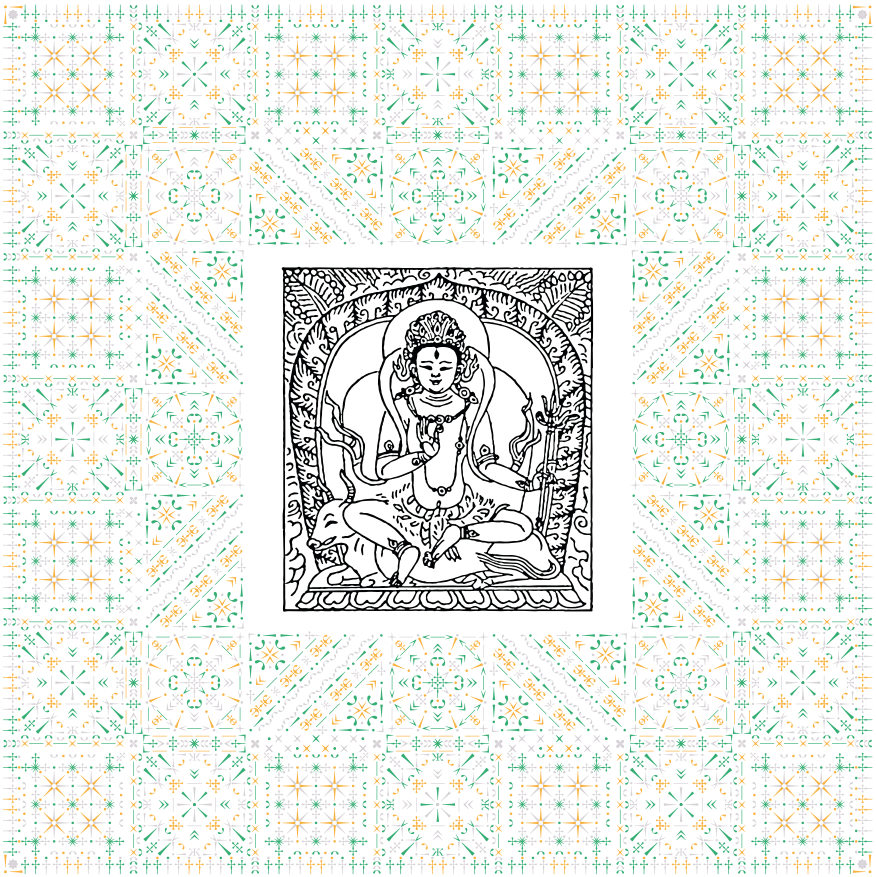
नमस्त्रितत्त्वविन्यासशिवशक्तिसमन्विते ।
ग्रहवेतालयक्षौघनाशिनि प्रवरे तुरे ॥२१॥

> Homage to Tārā, with the power to liberate[1]
> endowed by the Three Realities,[2] [3]
> who destroys the floods of *graha*, *vetāla*, and *yakṣa*[4] —
> O Supreme One! O Swift One!

敬禮具三真實母
善靜威力皆具足
藥叉執魅尾怛辣
都哩最極除災禍

> Homage to Tārā, mother endowed with the Three Truths,[2]
> in whom virtue, tranquility, and might are all present —
> *yakṣa*,[4] possessive ghosts,[5] and *vetāla*[4] —
> O Swift One, who exceeds at destroying these calamities!

Tārā the Perfecter (*paripūraṇa-tārā*) sits in *ardha-paryaṅka* on a miraculously born bull on a lotus and moon disk. She is white, beautiful and shining, with one face having three eyes for the three Doors of Deliverance, and two arms, and of a very wrathful appearance, wrapped in a tigerskin loincloth, to purify hatred. With inexhaustible Compassion, She holds R a string of pearls, L a three-pronged lance to pierce the three poisons, which are the cause of *saṃsāra*. Her rite is for 'sky-going', e.g. going to the Akaniṣṭha Pure Land in this very life.



1. This is a literal translation of the phrase *śiva-śakti*, though *śiva*, of course, is a loaded term in Indic devotion capable of meaning everything from peace, fortune, grace, and liberation. The Tibetan translations take ཞི་བ *zhi ba* ('peace'), and likewise the Chinese translation emphasises 靜 ('quietude'). The term *śiva-śakti* is also obviously a play on the deity Śiva and his feminine counterpart Śakti, again evincing Tārā's Śaivist origins.
2. *Tattva* is a highly pregnant term in Indic philosophy, literally meaning 'that-ness' but more broadly pointing to truth or reality. Though meaningful in almost every strain of Indic thought, *tattva* is especially important in Śaivist philosphy, where it refers to the absolute structures and principles of the universe. In this verse, Tibetan commentaries explain that the *tri-tattva* refer to the the realities of the body, the speech, and the mind. These three are in turn paralleled respectively by the three syllables of *oṃ* (produced from the crown), *āḥ* (from the throat), and *hūṃ* (from the heart). That Tārā's pacifying and liberating powers are endowed with these realities is to say that she has dominion over all three, and thus is able to pacify and liberate all aspects of human existence.
3. Wayman takes a decidedly strange version of this verse, replacing *tri-tattva* with *tri-tatā*, translating the first *pada* as 'endowed with the Power (*śakti*) of Śiva to dispose the state of the Third'. However, the Tibetan and Chinese translations suggest *tri-tattva* to be the more correct reading.
4. *Graha*, *vetāla*, and *yakṣa* are all different types of demons, spirits, and other supernatural beings. See note to verse 6 on *vetāla* and *yakṣa*. *Graha* are malignant demons associated with the planets and stars.
5. The Chinese 執魅 roughly means 'possession' or 'bewitchment' — i.e. usually by a malignant spirit — and is likely a local translation of *graha*.

POSTLUDE

मन्त्रमूलमिदं स्तोत्रं नमस्कारैकविंशकम् ।
यः पठेत्प्रयतो धीमान्देव्या भक्तिसमन्वितः ॥२२॥

This hymn, rooted in the *mantra*,[1]
comprising twenty-one homages —
should be recited by those who are pious,[2]
wise, and endowed with devotion to the goddess!

若有智者勤精進
至心誦此二十一
救度尊處誠信禮
是故讚嘆根本呪

If those endowed with wisdom wish to progress with diligence and purity,
then they shall sincerely recite these twenty-one [verses] —
if they wish to place devotion, faith, and propriety upon the Lord of Salvation,[3]
thus shall they sing exaltations with this foundational hymn!

1. This first *pada* that begins the postlude — intended to lay out the benefits and merits of the Twenty-one Hymns — has presented considerable difficulties for both Tibetan and other later translators. The thirteenth-century Tibetan translator Pang Lo-drö Ten-pa (*dpang blo gros brtsan pa*; དཔང་བློ་གྲོས་བརྟན་པ) interpreted the *mantra-mūla-stotra* ('*mantra*-rooted praise) to be the verse featured in the prelude of this text, separate from the main collection of twenty-one verses. The confusion is amplified by the ambiguous reading of *eka-viṃśa-ka*, which may mean either 'increased by twenty-one' or 'comprising twenty-one', However, I find the interpretation championed by Gendün Drup-pa (the First Dalai Lama, *dge 'dun grub pa*; དགེ་འདུན་གྲུབ་པ) and his gurus most convincing — that the *mantra-mūla* is a description of the *stotra*, and thus the whole text is a *mantra*-rooted praise. Tibetan practice generally cuts short the recitation of this text half-way through verse 22, yet clearly the entirety of these twenty-eight verses was always intended to be a single, unified text, as the verses consist of exactly 108 lines (at four lines per verse) — an extremely common and formulaic number held to be auspicious throughout Buddhist practice.
2. *Prayata* (here translated as 'pious') is used in this version of this verse. Other readings also include *prasanna* ('clear'; especially in Wayman) or *prayatna* ('diligent'), though these readings do not fit the poetic metre as well. Both the Tibetan and Chinese translations seem to take the reading of 'faithful'.
3. This is another epithet for Tārā, whose Chinese name is **救度佛母** ('*Buddha*-Mother of Salvation')

सायं वा प्रातरुत्थाय स्मरेत्सर्वाभय प्रदम् ।
सर्वपापप्रशमनं सर्वदुर्गतिनाशनम् ॥ २३ ॥

For those who remember it[1] at dusk,[2] or[3] when rising at dawn,
it grants refuge from all fear,
remedy for all sin,
and removal of all misfortune![4]

每晨旦起夕時禮
憶念施諸勝無畏
一切罪業盡消除
悉能超越諸惡趣

At every dawn and every evening, reverence
and remembrance[1] shall grant triumph over all fears,
absolute extinction of all sinful deeds,
and complete transcendence from all evil inclinations![4]

1. As a direct continuation of verse 22, this verse is still referring directly back to the text itself and its efficacies.
2. de Blonay's edition reads so *'yaṃ* ('he' or 'this') instead of *sayaṃ* ('evening'), though given the context of the *pada* and the frequent inconsistencies of that edition, this was likely a scribal error of some kind.
3. Tibetan translations generally take 'and' instead of 'or' — again, given context, likely a scribal error confusing *dang* (དང; 'and') and *dam* (དམ; 'or').
4. The Sanskrit *durgati* (literally 'mal-migration') can mean 'distress' in a general sense, but in Buddhist theology also specifically alludes to the three lower states of rebirth in *saṃsara* — the realms of animals, *preta* (hungry ghosts who suffer endless craving), and hell. The Chinese 惡趣 (literally 'evil inclination') is a common translation for *durgati*.

अभिषिक्तो भवेत्तूर्णं सप्तभीर्जिनकोटभिः ।
अस्मिन्महत्त्वमासाद्य सोऽन्ते बौद्धपदं व्रजेत् ॥२४॥

Swiftly shall they[1] be anointed
by seventy million[2] conquering *buddha*[3],
and reaching[4] greatness therein,
they shall at last reach *buddha*-hood!

此等速能得聰慧
七俱胝佛所灌頂
現世富貴壽延安
當來趣向諸佛位

Swiftly shall they[1] gain wit and wisdom,
anointed[5] by seventy million[2] *buddha* —
on this mortal coil shall they attain wealth, lengthened life, and comfort,
and in the future shall they aspire towards all *buddha*-hoods!

1. This verse, again in continuation of the previous verses, is referring to those who recite this text and the benefits they may incur from it.
2. *Koṭi* (*crore* in Indian English) is a common word in Indian literature (especially Buddhist texts), usually meaning ten million, as part of a system of words for expressing very large numbers. The Chinese 俱胝 is a common transliteration of *koṭi*.
3. *Jina* is a common epithet for *buddha* — also see note to verse 4.
4. Wayman uses *āpadya* as opposed to *āsādya* — largely to the same effect.
5. The Chinese 灌頂 (literally 'to pour onto one's head') is a common translation of *abhiṣeka* — the traditional Indic act of anointment or devotion by pouring liquid onto an icon.

विषं तस्य महाघोरं स्थावरं वाथ जङ्गमम् ।
स्मरणात्प्रलयं याति खादितं पीतमेव वा ॥२५॥

Terrible poisons — whether from
beasts, plants, or minerals[1] —
become dissolved by this recitation,[2]
even when already devoured or drunk!

有時誤服諸毒物
或自然生或合成
憶念聖尊真實力
諸惡毒藥盡消滅

When you accidentally ingest poisons,
whether natural or man-made,[1]
recall the true power of the holy lord,
and all evil poisons shall be extinguished!

1. More accurately, the dichotomy presented here is that between 'stationary' (*sthāvara*; i.e. plants & minerals) versus 'animate' (*jaṅgama*; i.e. venom coming from living animals) poisons. The Chinese edition presents a slightly different dichotomy between 'natural' and 'unnatural' (or artificial) poisons. Gendün Drup-pa's commentary further interprets 'stationary' poisons to be a metaphor for the persistent and abiding poison of delusion itself, and the destruction it begets of positive *karma* through violent hatred, in opposition to the more mundane and worldly suffering caused by the 'animate' poisons.
2. *Smaraṇa* also carries a sense of 'memory', in addition to the physical act of recitation.

ग्रहज्वरविषार्तानां परमर्तिविनाशनम् ।
अन्येषां चैव सत्त्वानां द्विस्त्रिसप्ताभिवर्तिनम् ॥२६॥

Those afflicted by spirits,[1] fevers, and poisons —
all their worst pains are extinguished[2] —
even that of other beings.
When chanted twice, thrice, and seven times[3] [4] —

或見他人遭鬼魅
或發熱病受諸苦
若轉此讚二三七
彼諸苦惱悉蠲除

If you see others encounter haunting spirits,
or afflicted by fevers and various sufferings,
if you recite this chant twice, thrice, and seven times,
all suffering shall be relieved!

1. On *graha*, see note to verse 21.
2. Various versions of the Sanskrit text for this *pada* differ slightly in the precise words used. For example, *ārta* ('affliction') is replaced with *arti* or *ārti* (all ultimately holding roughly the same meaning, and derived from the root √*ṛt*). This becomes more problematic with *vināśanam* (the accusative singular of *vināśana*, meaning 'destruction'), when Wayman's version uses *vināśānām* — the genitive plural of *vināśa* (meaning the same). This grammatical variation has led Wayman to interpret the final part of the verse not as a caesura, but rather as the act of chanting 'twice, thrice, and seven times' as leading to the extinguishing of all suffering — including by 'spirits, fevers, and poisons'. In his version, the translation would thus read: 'Whether afflicted by spirits, fevers, and poisons, even the worst suffering — even that of other beings — is extinguished by chanting this text twice, thrice, and seven times.'
3. Following Willson's edition (as well as Stefan Mang and Peter Woods's translation), I have taken the second half of this *pada* to be caesuric — to be completed by the final verse.
4. This somewhat ambiguous idea of reciting this *stotra* 'twice, thrice, and seven times' has led to some exegeses as to the precise practices of Tārā worship. Gendün Drup-pa interprets the 'twice' by harking back to verse 22, where the two adjectival descriptions of *prayata* ('pious') and *dhīmat* ('wise') represent the two types of *ārya* (noble beings in Buddhism who have entered onto the path of enlightenment) — the wise *dharm'ânusārin* (the '*dharma*-follower' who pursues truth via the *dharma*) and the pious *śraddh'ânusārin* (the 'trusting follower' who pursues truth out of piety). These two classes of believers, according to Gendün Drup-pa, are to recite this *stotra* thrice throughout the day, and at each occurrence seven times — that is, 21 times per day. Meanwhile, the great Tibetan teacher and

पुत्रकामो लभेत्पुत्रं धनकामो लभेद्धनम् ।
सर्वकामानवाप्नोति न विघ्नैः प्रतिहन्यते ॥२७॥

those who desire children shall receive children;
those who desire wealth shall receive wealth.
They shall fulfil all their desires;
they shall not be halted by any hindrance!

欲乞男女得男女
求財寶位獲富饒
善能圓滿隨意願
一切障礙不能侵

Those who pray for children shall receive children;
those who seek wealth and fortune shall attain overflowing riches —
the virtuous shall fulfil their desires with perfection,
and no obstacles shall ever hinder them!

chronicler Butön Rinchen Drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*; བུ་སྟོན་རིན་ཆེན་གྲུབ་) interpreted the verse slightly differently — that one should recite this *stotra* during the two halves of the day (daytime and nighttime), thrice during each half, and seven during each recital. That is, 42 times per day. Another particular comment of interest by Gendün Drup-pa is his seeming rebuttal of rival teachings in his commentary on this particular verse (see also verse 27): 'some smooth-talkers say that on reciting twice, one desiring a child will get a child, on reciting three times, one desiring wealth will find wealth, and on reciting seven times, one obtains all one's desires.'

इति श्रीसम्यक्संबुद्धवैरोचनभाषितं भगवत्यार्यतारादेव्या ।
नमस्कारैकविंशतिनामाष्टोत्तरशतकं बुद्धभाषितं परिसमाप्तम् ॥

Spoken by glorious Vairocana[1] of complete enlightenment,[2] to the noble Lady Tārā —
thus these twenty-one homages in 108 verses, delivered by a *buddha*, is complete.

根本十字真言
唵多哩咄多哩都哩莎訶
救度八難真言
唵多哩咄多哩都哩薩哩嚩
琶耶那舍儞薩哩嚩覩枯
多哩禰莎訶

Ten-letter root *mantra*:
OṂ TĀRE TUTTĀRE TŪRE SVĀHĀ
Mantra for salvation from the Eight Difficulties:[3] [4]
OṂ TĀRE TUTTĀRE TŪRE SARVA-
BHAYA-NĀŚANI SARVA-DUḤKHA-
TĀRIṆI SVĀHĀ![5]

1. Vairocana is a major *buddha* — seen as a primordial *buddha* who is the *dharma-kaya* (*dharma*-body) of all other *buddha*. The Buddha is seen as an emanation of Vairocana.
2. *Samyak-saṃbuddha* (literally 'wholly enlightened') is another Sanskrit term for attaining *buddha*-hood.
3. Chinese *mantra* are generally rough transliterations of Sanskrit verses — given phonetic changes over time it is not always straightforward to reconstruct the original meanings. The following reconstruction is based on my best view, and roughly translates to: '*Oṃ* to Tārā, Swift Tuttārā, the destroyer of all fears and deliverer from all suffering — *svāhā*!'. The *mantra*, in calling Tārā the *sarva-duḥkha-tāriṇi*, plays on Tārā's name. Both *tārā* and *tārin* derive from the verbal root √*tṝ* ('to cross') — Tārā is 'one who causes others to cross' (i.e. a saviour).
4. The Eight Difficulties list the primary obstacles faced by sentient beings in their path to liberation. They are: 1) rebirth in a hell; 2) rebirth as a *preta*; 3) rebirth as a beast; 4) rebirth in a heaven where pleasures distract beings from meditation; 5) rebirth in a period when the *dharma* is absent; 6) rebirth with physical disabilities (especially blindness and deafness); 7) rebirth as a worldly intellectual lacking in faith; 8) rebirth in *uttara-kuru* (a Vedic region to the north of the Himalayas, said to be characterised by abundance and pleasure).
5. Another version of the Chinese text (TT.1108B) has a different, much longer set of verses as the conclusion. This alternative version has been omitted for concision.

GLOSSARY

Ardha-paryaṅka	Similar to a 'half-lotus' pose wherein only one leg is crossed over the other
Cakra	'Wheel'; wheels are an important symbol in Buddhism as they symbolise the path of enlightenment, and the turning of wheels imply great revolutionary change
Dharma	Usually translated as 'law', but more broadly meaning the fundamental doctrine, truth, and meaning of existence within Indic religions
Homa	A type of fire ritual common to Indic religions that involve consecration and sacrifice
Khaṭvāṅga	A type of studded club topped with a skull ornament — prominently used in tantric traditions
Maṇḍala	In tantric Buddhism, the *maṇḍala* is the abode of a specific *buddha* or deity, as well as an object of focus or source of power which may help a practitioner achieve enlightenment
Mantra	A general word for various types of incantations and formulaic utterances, usually embued with certain powers
Māra	In Buddhism, a personification of death, evil, and temptation — either singular or plural

Mudrā	'Sign'; refers to mystical hand gestures employed to represent or invoke certain principles and powers
Oṃ	Commonly explained as the fundamental sound of the universe within Indic religions; often used to mark the beginning of a *mantra*
Pāramitā	Commonly translated as 'perfection' — i.e. the noble character associated with enlightened beings
Prajñā	'Wisdom', or the enlightened being's understanding of truth
Pratiṣṭha	A type of ritual consecration of religious images & buildings
Pratyālīḍha	A posture wherein the right foot is bent and the left foot is extended forward, as if aiming a bow — commonly associated with Śiva
Saṃsāra	The realm of mortal existence & rebirth
Sattva-paryaṅka	Similar to 'full-lotus' pose, with the legs folded over one another
Siddhi	Commonly explained as powers or abilities produced by yogic advancements in tantric traditions
Tathāgata	Literally 'one who has thus come' — commonly used as an epithet for the Buddha, or other *buddha* and enlightened beings
Uṣṇīṣa	The protruberance on top of the head commonly attributed to the Buddha, said to represent his 'crown'

	as a symbol of enlightenment and his authority over the *dharma*
Utpala	Blue lotuses / water-lillies native to India, symbolising in Buddhism the salvation of wisdom & enlightenment
Vajra	A type of ritual sceptre prominent in Indic religions — in Buddhism it often symbolises indestructibility and the fundamental (and empty) nature of the universe
Vajra-paryaṅka	Similar to 'full-lotus' pose, with the legs crossed over one another

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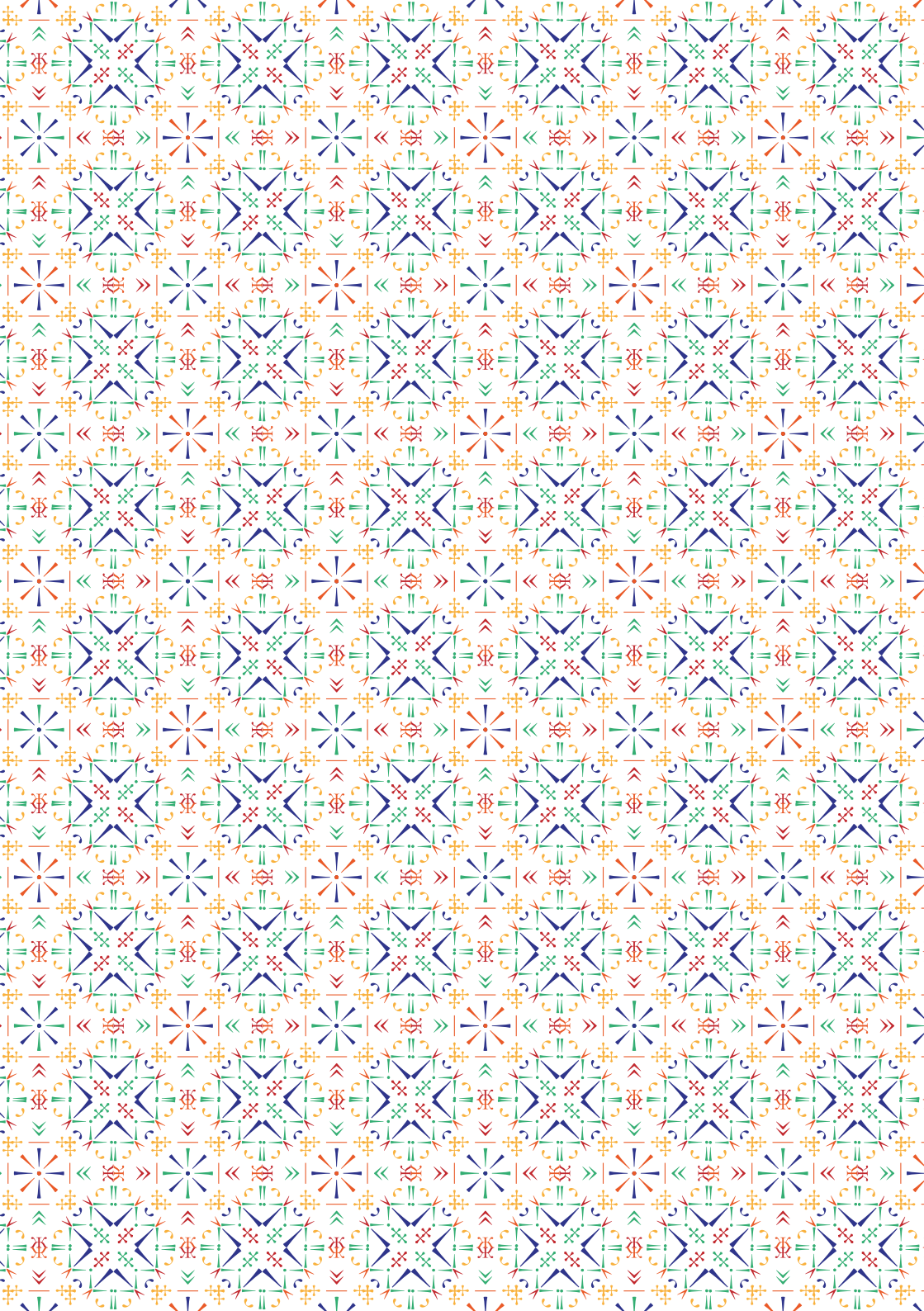

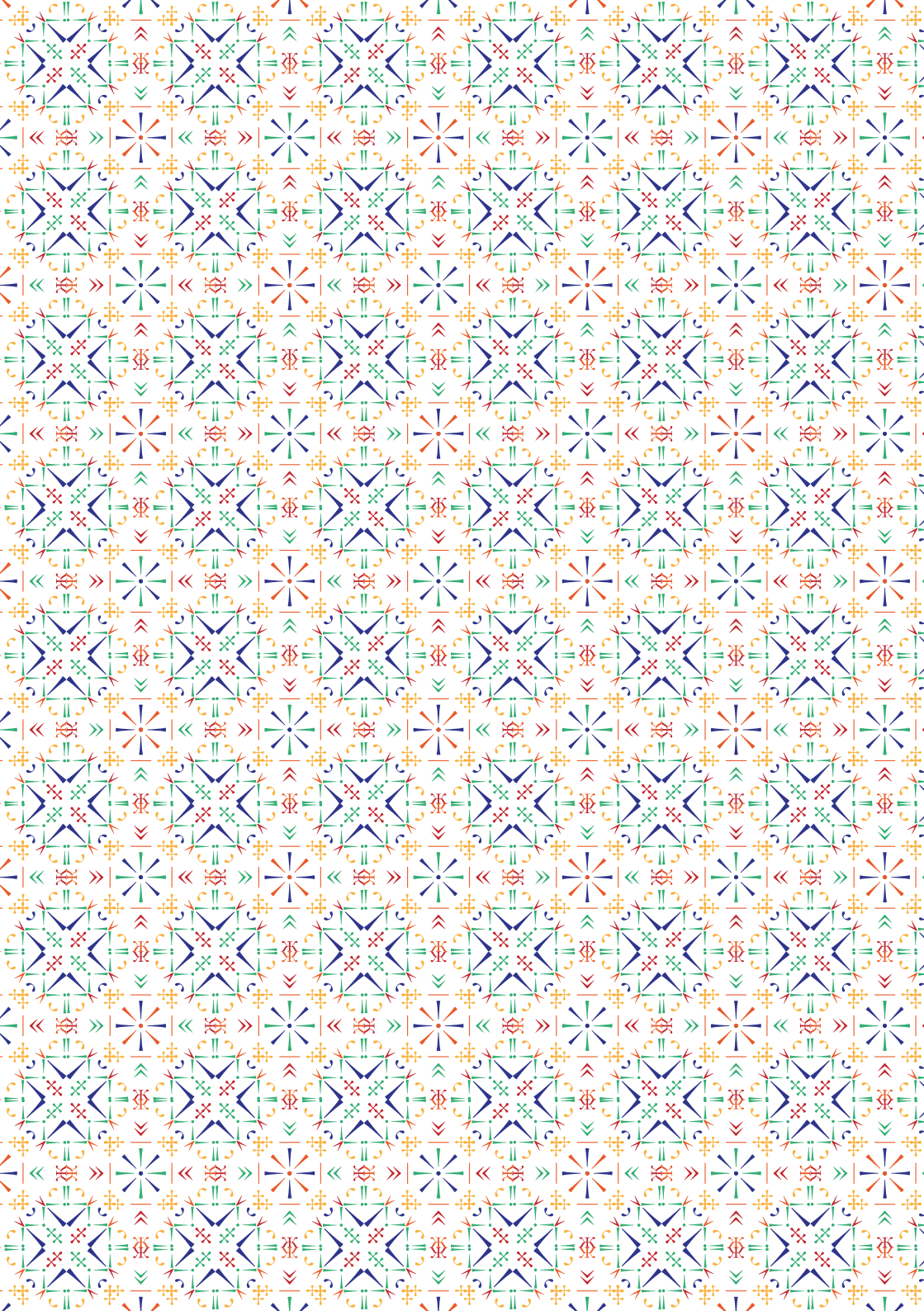

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